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HISTORICAL SKETCHES
OF
CHRISTIANITY IN ENGLAND,
FROM THE EARLIEST RECORDS
TO THE PASSING OF THE
ROMAN CATHOLIC RELIEF BILL, IN 1829.

BY J. B. HOLROYD.

**"Nescire quid anteaquam natus sis acciderit, id est semper esse
puerum."—CICERO.**

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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INTRODUCTION

OF

CHRISTIANITY INTO ENGLAND.

CHAPTER XII.

General remarks on the state of the church on the accession of Henry II.—Contentions between the Abbots and the Bishops about exemptions.—Cruelties inflicted on some pious Germans.—Death of Theobald Archbishop of Canterbury, and election of Thomas Becket.—Serious disputes between the King and Becket.—Council of Westminster.—Superstitious prophecy.—Council of Clarendon.—Miscellaneous articles.—The murder of Becket.

The progress of Papal influence and corruption, as traced in the preceding part of these Sketches, will have prepared the reader for viewing the state of religion in England at the accession of Henry II. All orders in the church contributed, though in different ways, to corrupt the native purity of the religion of Jesus.

The Popes led the way, and would not suffer the propagation of any doctrine that tended to diminish their despotic authority ; but compelled the public teachers so to interpret the precepts of Christianity, as to render them subservient to the support of Papal dominion. Those who had the honest courage to place the authority of the gospel above that of the Roman Pontiffs, as the rule of life and conduct, were answered with the weighty arguments of fire and sword, and received death in the most cruel forms as the reward of their sincerity. The Priests and monks found it to their advantage to keep the people in the grossest darkness, that they might the more effectually dazzle their eyes with the glare of a ludicrous pomp of gaudy worship, as if the whole of religion consisted in a round of vain ceremonies, bodily austerities, and a stupid veneration for the Clergy. The consequences were, that superstition and ignorance were substituted for true religion, and reigned over the multitude with absolute sway. Relicks rose into higher estimation than the merits of Christ, and were supposed to be more effectual, than the most fervent prayer, offered to the Father through the intercession of the Redeemer. The Saints had a greater number of worshippers than the Supreme

Being ; nor did these superstitious worshippers trouble themselves about that knotty question, which in after times gave birth to so much debate namely ; how the inhabitants of heaven, become acquainted with the prayers that are addressed to them from the earth ?

Some of the means they had recourse to for raising the revenues of the church, were the vilest impositions that ever disgraced the conduct of men. Whilst the Bishops were raising immense sums of money by allowing the opulent transgressors to purchase the remission of the penalties imposed upon them ; the Abbots and monks were enriching their convents, by carrying about the country, the carcasses and relicks of the saints in solemn procession, and selling to the deluded multitudes, a look, a touch, or an embrace of these sacred remains at certain fixed prices. By these raree-shows, the monastic orders drew as much from the pockets of the poor, as the Bishops did from the more opulent by the sale of remissions.

Such was the general state of religion when Henry II, ascended the throne, whose government was much disturbed by the violent contentions between the crown and the mitre.

In the second year of his reign A. D. 1155, there was a violent dispute between Walter, Abbot of Battle Abbey, and his diocesan, Hilary Bishop of Chichester, the former, with several other rich Abbots, claiming on behalf of their abbeys, exemption from the jurisdiction of their Bishops. This contest was at last decided in favour of the Abbot, whose plea was founded upon a charter of exemption granted to his abbey by its founder William the Conqueror.* The success of this Abbot encouraged others to aspire after the same privilege; to obtain which, some made no scruple to forge charters of exemption; but failing in that, they applied to Rome for bulls, to exempt them from the jurisdiction of their ordinaries, and thereby subjecting themselves immediately to the Pope. The first who applied to Rome for such a bull, was Robert, Abbot of St. Albans, who obtained one from Pope Adrian IV, a native of England, whose original name was Nicholas Breakspear. He spent several years of his youth in the most menial offices about the abbey of St. Albans, where his father was a monk. The success of Abbot Robert, was not the effect of this adventitious circumstance, for we are told that he presented his holiness with three

* Spelman Concil, t. 2. p. 53-58.

mitres and a pair of sandals of exquisite workmanship, and divided two hundred marks among the courtiers. The liberality of this Abbot, paved the way for him to obtain two other bulls; the one granting him and his successors permission to wear the episcopal ornaments; and the other, appointing the parochial processions and offerings of Hertfordshire, at Whitsuntide, to be made to the church of St. Albans, and not as they had hitherto been, to the cathedral of Lincoln.* These bulls, which greatly diminished both the power and revenues of the Bishop of Lincoln, gave rise to some violent disputes with that Prelate, which, by the mere force of bribery, terminated in favour of the abbey.†

Many other Abbots in different parts of England, made similar applications to the court of Rome; and by employing the same means, obtained the same exemptions, and became mitred Abbots. This innovation very much disturbed the ancient order of church-government, by diminishing the episcopal, and increasing the papal power.—But none felt the fatal effects of these exemptions so sensibly as those who had obtained them. For the exempted Abbots were so much harassed by expensive journies

* M. Paris, Vit. Abbot, p. 46, 47. † Id. p. 48-53.

to Rome, and by the various exactions of that insatiable court, that they had great reason to lament the success of their ambition.*

The Roman Pontiffs were always on the alert, ready to take advantage of every circumstance by which they might extend their authority over the temporal, as well as the spiritual affairs of the kingdoms of the earth. Though King Henry II. was a wise and prudent Prince, yet in the second year of his reign, A. D. 1156, he very imprudently contributed to exalt the power and pretensions of the Pope, by accepting a grant of the kingdom of Ireland from Pope Adrian IV. The soliciting of this grant, was a plain acknowledgment, that the Pope had a right to deprive the Irish Princes of their dominions, and to bestow them upon another. This right, his Holiness incorporated in the body of the grant. "For it is "undeniable (says he,) and your Majesty "acknowledges it, that all islands on which "Christ the Sun of Righteousness hath "shined, and which have received the "Christian faith, belong of right to St. "Peter, and the most holy Roman Church."† To a proposition so pregnant with evil, a King of England ought never to have given any countenance. But the wisest Princes

* Henry, vol. 5, p. 337. † M. Paris, Hist. p. 67.

are sometimes so blinded by their ambition, as not to see the most obvious consequences of their conduct.*

In the year A. D. 1159, a company of about thirty men and women, who were Germans, appeared in England, and soon attracted general attention by the singularity of their religious practices and opinions.—They were apprehended and brought before a council of the Clergy at Oxford. On being interrogated about their doctrines, *Gerard*, their teacher a man of learning, said, that they were Christians, and believed the doctrines of the Apostles. Upon a more minute inquiry, it was found that they held in abhorrence several of the doctrines of the church of Rome, such as the doctrine of purgatory,—prayers for the dead,—and the invocation of saints. On refusing to renounce those damnable heresies as they were called, they were condemned as incorrigible heretics. The King, by the advice of the Clergy, commanded them to be branded with a red-hot iron on the forehead, and Gerard, to be distinguished from the rest, by being branded also on the chin,—to be whipt through the streets of Oxford,—to have their clothes cut short by the girdles, and in that state turned into the open fields,

* Dr. Henry, vol. 5, p. 338.

all persons being forbidden to afford them any shelter or relief under the severest penalties. This cruel sentence was executed in its utmost rigor; and it being the depth of winter, they all lost their lives through cold and hunger. They had made one female convert in England, who through fear of a similar punishment, recanted. These Germans appear to have been the first who suffered death in England, for the vague crime of heresy. They submitted to their fate in the true spirit of the martyrs of Jesus, frequently repeating, "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake.*—What a darkness must at that time have covered this land! A wise King, a renowned university,—the whole body of Clergy, joined by the laity in persecuting unto death, a few pious Christians who could not subscribe to the anti-scriptural dogmas of the church of Rome. Happy and honourable had it been for our country, had those hard-fated Germans been the last that suffered on the same account. But this was a period in which scriptural truth and piety were rejected, whilst the most incredible stories were believed without examination. Giraldus, in his typography of Ireland, relates the following with gravity. "When St.

* J. Brompt. col. 1050. Milner C. Hist. vol. 3, p. 459.

“ Kewen (says he) was one day praying
 “ with both his hands held up to heaven,
 “ out of the window of his chamber, a
 “ swallow laid an egg in one of them ; and
 “ such was the patience and good-nature of
 “ the saint, that he neither drew in nor shut
 “ his hand till the swallow had built her
 “ nest, laid all her eggs, and hatched her
 “ young. To preserve the remembrance
 “ of this fact, every statue of St. Kevan, in
 “ Ireland, has a swallow in one of its hands.”*
 Tales like the above need no comment.—
 Though they are implicitly believed by the de-
 luded Roman Catholics, they are only noticed
 here in order to shew the gross impositions
 practised by the Roman Clergy, who find
 it necessary to prevent their people from ac-
 quiring general information, lest the absur-
 dities of their system should be exposed ; an
 object, which the discipline of their church
 is most admirably calculated to effect.

On the death of Pope Adrian IV, which
 took place September 1st, A. D. 1159, two
 other Popes were elected. Octavian, who
 assumed the name of *Victor III.* was chosen
 by one part of the cardinals ; and Rolland,
 who took the name of *Alexander III.*, was
 chosen by the other. The first was received
 as Pope by the Emperor Frederic ; while

* Topogra. Hiberniæ, c. 28, p. 727.

the Kings of France and England, after some deliberation, acknowledged the latter.* This schism, in the *undivided* and *infallible* church, continued about fifteen years, and was the cause of incalculable confusion and disorder in the church.

Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury died April 18th, A. D. 1161, and was succeeded by the famous Thomas Becket, who was the occasion of so much political contention during his life, and the object of so much superstitious veneration after his death. Archbishop Theobald became acquainted with Becket when he was pursuing his studies at Paris, and being charmed with his graceful and winning address, gave him two livings in Kent, and obtained for him two prebends in the cathedrals of London and Lincoln. He was next made Archdeacon of Canterbury and provost of Beverley. Immediately after the accession of Henry II. to the throne, A. D. 1158, by the earnest recommendation of the Archbishop, he was appointed Chancellor of England. The Chancellor of England, at this time, had no distinct court of judicature in which he presided; but he acted together with the Justiciary and other great officers of state, in the affairs of the revenue and exchequer.

* Du Pin, cent. 12, p. 116.

The great seal being in his custody, he supervised and sealed the writs and precepts that issued in proceedings pending in the King's court, and in the exchequer. Besides the office of Chancellor, and a great number of ecclesiastical benefices, he had royal castles and forts committed to his custody; the temporalities of vacant Prelacies, and the escheats of great baronies belonging to the crown. These revenues he expended without account or controul; and the King reposed in him such a degree of confidence, that he seemed almost to share the throne with the sovereign.

Becket would occasionally, lay aside the ecclesiastical habit and character, and assume the military profession. In an expedition with the King to France, he headed a body of men in his own pay, and commanded at various sieges. In his manners there was a certain inexpressible grace, derived from nature and improved by art, which rendered his company so agreeable to the King, that he became his greatest favourite, and perpetual companion in most of his pleasures.

At the time of Archbishop Theobald's death, the King was in Normandy; but as soon as he heard of it he resolved to raise his Chancellor to the Primacy, in hopes by

his means, of governing the church in tranquillity. This promotion was retarded for about a year by the opposition of the Empress Maud, the King's mother, and of the Clergy and Bishops of England. But Henry's resolution was fixed, and his fondness for his favourite overcame all remonstrances, and the Chancellor was elected Archbishop of Canterbury at Westminster, June 3rd, and being first ordained Priest, was consecrated at Canterbury, June 6th, A. D. 1162.

No sooner did Becket find himself firmly seated in the episcopal throne of Canterbury, than he suddenly changed his whole mode of life, and from the gayest and most luxurious courtier, he became the most austere and solemn monk. Without having previously acquainted the King of his intention, and very much to his surprise and dissatisfaction, he resigned the office of Chancellor. A most ungrateful act towards his royal benefactor, who had loaded him with wealth and honours.

Before the King returned to England, in January, A. D. 1163, he received so many complaints of the severities of the new Primate, that he became sensible, when it was too late, that he had made a wrong choice. At the first interview Becket had with the

King at Southampton, it was observed by the whole court, that though he was treated with respect, he was not received with the same marks of friendship as on former occasions. The King soon after gave a plainer proof of his dissatisfaction with the Primate, by obliging him to resign the Archdeaconry of Canterbury, which he did with great reluctance.

In April, A. D. 1163, Becket attended a council at Tours, summoned by Alexander III, the Pope acknowledged by the Kings of France and England. At this council, the Archbishop of Canterbury had every possible mark of respect and honour paid him by the Pope and Cardinals, who could easily discover, that vanity and the love of admiration were his predominant passions. It is highly probable, that at this council, Becket, at the instigation of the Pope, formed the design of becoming the champion for the liberties of the church, and the immunities of the Clergy. This much at least is certain, that soon after his return, he began to prosecute this design without his former reserve; and the zeal which he manifested, produced an open rupture between him and his sovereign.*

* Inett's Church Hist. b. 2, chap. 12, p. 238.

Nothing could be more opposite than the sentiments and views of the King and the Primate, concerning the privileges and immunities which were now claimed by the Clergy. The King was determined to be the sovereign of all his subjects, Clergy as well as laity ; to oblige them to obey his laws, or to answer for their disobedience in his courts of justice. Becket, on the other hand, maintained that the Clergy were subject only to the laws of the church, and were to be judged only in spiritual courts, and to be punished only by ecclesiastical censures.

In order to bring this question to a speedy issue, which the licentiousness of the Clergy, and the atrocious crimes committed by some of them at this time, rendered absolutely necessary, the King summoned a council of the Clergy and Nobility to meet at Westminster. The King opened the council with an excellent speech, in which he complained of the mischiefs occasioned by the thefts, robberies, and murders, committed by the Clergy with impunity ; and concluded with requiring that the Archbishop and the other Bishops would consent, that if when a clerk was degraded for any crime, he should be immediately taken to the King's officers, that he might be punished for it according

to the laws of the land. The Primate, dreading the compliance of the other Bishops with so reasonable a demand, earnestly entreated that they might be allowed to hold a private conference amongst themselves before they returned an answer, which was granted. In this conference, the other Bishops acknowledged, that the King's demand appeared to them to be agreeable to reason, law, and Scripture. But the Primate insisted with so much warmth and obstinacy, on the immunities granted to the Clergy by the canons of the church, that he silenced all his brethren, and persuaded them to return this answer to the King,—That they could not comply with his demand. On this the council broke up in confusion.†

The failure of Henry in his first attempt, did not induce him to relinquish his claims, but made him more determined to carry his point. By the earnest entreaties of his friends, Becket began to give way a little; and waiting upon the King at Oxford, he consented to promise obedience to the laws of the land, without annexing to this promise, as he had always before done, a saving of the privileges of his order. The King was highly pleased with his success, and re-

† Stephanides, *Vita S. Thomæ*, p. 31. Extr. Henry, vol. 5, p. 344.

solved to have this consent of all the Prelates, to obey without reserve the laws of the land. To set this long disputed point at rest, the King convened a great council of the Clergy and Barons to meet at Clarendon, on the festival of St. Hilary, A. D. 1164. Before the meeting of this assembly, Becket had changed his mind, and when he appeared before the council, he positively refused to promise obedience to the laws in the terms to which he had agreed at Oxford.

The obstinacy of the Primate provoked both the King and his Nobles, and produced the most violent debates between the Bishops and the Barons for three days in succession; during which time, every possible means were tried to bring Becket to obedience. At last by the tears and entreaties of two Knights-templars, Richard of Hastings, and Hostiens of Bolonia, for whom he had a great esteem, he was again softened, and appearing before the council, he, with all the other Bishops, solemnly promised and swore, in the words of truth, and without any reserve to obey all the royal laws and customs which had been established in England in the reign of his Majesty's grandfather, Henry I.† These laws and customs, commonly called *the constitutions of Clarendon*, were put in writ-

† Vita S. Thomæ, l. 1, c. 21, p. 39, Extr. Henry, vol. 5, p. 345.

ing, read in the council, and one copy of them delivered to the Primate, another to the Archbishop of York, and a third deposited among the records of the kingdom.—The Constitutions of Clarendon, consisted of sixteen articles which we here insert, in order that the reader may form a just idea of the prerogatives and privileges that were claimed equally by the King and the Clergy, and produced such warm debates between the state and the church.

I. When any difference relating to the right of patronage, arises between the laity, or between the Clergy and laity, the controversy is to be tried and ended in the King's court.

II. Those churches, which are fees of the crown, cannot be granted away in perpetuity without the King's consent.

III. When the Clergy are charged with any misdemeanour, and summoned by the Justiciary, they shall be obliged to make their appearance in his court, and plead to such parts of the indictment as shall be put to them; and likewise to answer to such articles in the ecclesiastical court as they shall be prosecuted for by that jurisdiction: always provided, that the King's Justiciary shall send an officer to inspect the proceedings of the court Christian. And in case any clerk is convicted, or pleads guilty, he is to forfeit the privilege of his character, and to be protected by the church no longer.

IV. No Archbishops, Bishops, or Parsons, are allowed to depart the kingdom without a license from the crown; and provided they have leave to travel, they shall give security, not to act or solicit any thing during their absence.

ing their passage, stay, or return, to the prejudice of the King or kingdom.

V. When any of the laity are prosecuted in the ecclesiastical courts, the charge ought to be proved before the Bishop by legal and reputable witnesses; and the course of the process is to be so managed, that the Archdeacon may not lose any part of his right, or the profits accruing to his office: and if any offenders appear screened from prosecution upon the score, either of favour or quality, the sheriff, at the Bishop's instance, shall order twelve sufficient men of the neighbourhood to make oath before the Bishop, that they will discover the truth according to the best of their knowledge.

VI. Excommunicated persons shall not be obliged to make oath, or give security to continue upon the place where they live: but only to abide by the judgment of the church in order to their absolution.

VII. No person that *holds in chief of the King*, or any of his Barons, shall be excommunicated, or any of their estates put under an interdict, before application be made to the King, provided he is in the kingdom; and, in case his highness be out of England, then the Justiciary must be acquainted with the dispute in order to make satisfaction: and thus what belongs to the cognizance of the King's court must be tried there; and that which belongs to the court Christian must be remitted to that jurisdiction.

VIII. In case of appeals in ecclesiastical causes, the first step is to be made from the Archdeacon to the Bishop: and from the Bishop to the Archbishop: and if the Archbishop fails to do justice, a further recourse may be had to the King, by whose order the controversy is to be finally decided in the Archbishop's court. Neither shall it be lawful for either of the parties to move for any farther remedy without leave from the crown.

IX. If a difference happens to arise between any Clergyman and layman concerning any tenement; and that the clerk pretends it held by frank almoine, [a tenure by divine service,] and the layman pleads it a lay-fee; in this case, the tenure shall be tried by the inquiry and verdict of twelve sufficient men of the neighbourhood, summoned according to the custom of the realm. And, if the tenement or thing in controversy shall be found almoine, the dispute concerning it shall be tried in the ecclesiastical court. But, if it is brought in a lay-fee, the suit shall be followed in the King's courts, unless both the plaintiff and defendant hold the tenement in question of the same Bishop; in which case the causes shall be tried in the court of such Bishop or Baron, with this farther proviso, that he who is seized of the thing in controversy shall not be disseized, hanging the suit, (i. e. during the suit, *pendente lite*) upon the score of the verdict abovementioned.

X. He who holds of the King in any city, castle, or borough, or resides upon any of the demesne lands of the crown, in case he is cited by the Archdeacon or Bishop, to answer any misbehaviour belonging to their cognizance; if he refuses to obey their summons, and stand to the sentence of the court, it shall be lawful for the ordinary to put him under an interdict, but not to excommunicate him, till the King's principal officer of the town shall be preacquainted with the case, in order to enjoin them to make satisfaction to the church. And if such officer or magistrate shall fail in his duty, he shall be fined by the King's judges. And then the Bishop may exert his discipline on the refractory person as he thinks fit.

XI. All Archbishops, Bishops, and ecclesiastical persons, who hold of the King in chief, and the tenure of a barony, are for that reason obliged to appear before the King's justices and ministers, to answer the duties of their tenure, and to observe all the usages and

customs of the realm; and, like other barons, are bound to be present at trials in the King's court, till sentence is to be pronounced for the losing of life or limbs.

XII. When any Archbishopric, Abbey, or Priory, of royal foundation, becomes vacant, the King is to make seizure: from which time all the profits and issues are to be paid the Exchequer, as if they were the demesne lands of the crown. And when it is determined the vacancy shall be filled up, the King is to summon the most considerable persons of the chapter to court, and the election is to be made in the chapel royal, with the consent of our Sovereign Lord the King, and by the advice of such persons of the government as his highness shall think fit to make use of. At which time the person elected, before his consecration, shall be obliged to do homage and fealty to the King, as his liege lord; which homage shall be performed in the usual form, with a clause for the saving the privilege of his order.

XIII. If any of the temporal barons, or great men, shall encroach upon the rights or property of any Archbishop, Bishop, or Archdeacon, and refuse to make satisfaction for wrong done by themselves, or their tenants, the King shall do justice to the party aggrieved. And if any person shall disseize the King of any part of his lands, or trespass upon his prerogative, the Archbishops, Bishops, and Archdeacons shall call him to an account, and oblige him to make the crown restitution: i. e. "They were to excommunicate such disseizers and injurious persons in case they proved refractory and incorrigible.

XIV. The goods and chattels of those who lie under forfeitures of felony or treason are not to be detained in any church or church-yard, to secure them against seizure and justice; because such goods are the King's property, whether they are lodged within the precincts of a church or without it.

XV. All actions and pleas of debts, though never so solemn in the circumstances of the contract, shall be tried in the King's courts.

XVI. The sons of copyholders are not to be ordained without the consent of the lord of the manor where he was born.*

The reader will at once perceive that these wise and equitable laws, were intended to reduce the ecclesiastics of all denominations, to a due subjection to the laws of their country,—to limit the jurisdiction of spiritual courts,—to guard against appeals to Rome, and the pronouncing of interdicts and excommunications without the consent of the King. Becket solemnly promised and swore, in the words of truth and without reserve, to obey the laws and customs of the “constitutions of Clarendon;” but he soon after began to exhibit signs of repentance, by extraordinary acts of mortification, and by discontinuing the performance of the offices of his function; until he obtained from the Pope a bull releasing him from the obligation of his oath, and enjoining him to resume the duties of his office. But though this bull reconciled his conscience to the violation of his oath, it did not save him from the fear of the King's indignation at his conduct; he therefore determined to retire privately out of the kingdom. With this in-

* Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. vol. 2, p. 271-273.

tention, in company with two faithful friends, he embarked at the port of Romney for France, but being twice driven back by contrary winds, he landed, and returned to Canterbury. The King having heard of his departure, sent his officers to seize his goods and revenues ; but on his appearing they returned without executing their orders. Conscious that he had transgressed those laws he had sworn to observe, he waited upon the King at Woodstock, to implore his pardon for attempting to leave the kingdom without his permission. The King received him without any other expression of displeasure, than asking him, "if he had left England because he thought it too little to contain them both."*

This interview was soon succeeded by fresh aggressions on the part of Becket, who publicly protected the Clergy from those punishments which their crimes deserved, and positively refused to obey a summons to attend the King's court. Henry was so much enraged at the proceedings of the Primate, that he determined to call him to account for his conduct before his peers, in a parliament which he summoned to meet at Northampton, October 17th, A. D. 1164. This parliament was numerously attended,

* Vita S. Thomæ, p. 43.

as the contest between the crown and the mitre, deeply affected the interest of the whole nation. On the first day the King in person accused the Archbishop of contumacy, in refusing to attend his court when he was summoned. Against this accusation, the Primate set up a defence, but it was so weak that the court unanimously found him guilty, and sentenced him to forfeit all his goods and chattels.*

Becket with much reluctance submitted to the sentence, and the King agreed to accept of five hundred pounds for the forfeiture, for the payment of which the Bishops became sureties. On the second day, the King demanded five hundred pounds that he lent Becket when he was Chancellor; and also, to render an account of two hundred and fifty thousand marks, which he affirmed that he received from vacant benefices when he was Chancellor, and required him to account for that sum. This demand so astonished Becket, that he begged leave to consult his brethren the Bishops in private before he returned an answer, which was granted. The Primate found that the Prelates differed widely in their opinions. Some of them advised him to resign his see, as the only means of appeasing the King's wrath;

* Ibid, p. 47.

others of them opposed this as a dangerous precedent, and too great a submission to the civil power. When Becket found that they could not come to any unanimous conclusion, he sent a message to the King and Barons, requesting them to allow him a little delay, which was granted till Monday. The state in which Becket's affairs now stood, had a visible effect on the minds of his friends, very few of whom returned with him to his lodgings. On Monday he was seized with a violent cholic, which put it out of his power to appear in parliament; but he sent a solemn promise that he would appear on the next day, though he should be carried in his bed. Early on Tuesday morning several of the Bishops waited upon him in his chamber, and earnestly entreated him to resign his see, assuring him that if he did not, he would be tried for perjury and high treason. Becket rejected their advice, and reproached them bitterly for deserting him in his contest; charged them not to sit in judgment upon their Primate; and solemnly declared, that he would sooner be burnt alive, than either abandon his station or forsake his flock.

Having celebrated mass, he dressed himself in his pontifical robes, and set out from his house with a consecrated host in one hand, and, when he approached the hall

where the King and parliament were sitting, he took the cross from the bearer, and carried it in the other hand.*

When the King was informed of the posture in which the Primate was advancing, he instantly retired into an inner room, and commanded all the Bishops and Barons to follow him. He then complained in the severest terms of the audacity of Becket; and was answered by the Barons, "That he had always been a vain and obstinate man, and ought never to have been raised to so high a station;—that he had been guilty of high treason, both against the King and kingdom; and they demanded that he should be immediately punished as a traitor."†

The Barons became so loud and vehement against Becket, that Roger, Archbishop of York, fearing that they would proceed to acts of violence, retired hastily, that he might not witness the bloody scene. The Bishop of Exeter went into the great hall, where the Primate sat almost alone, and, falling at his feet, conjured him to take pity on himself and on his brethren, and preserve them all from destruction, by complying with the King's will. But, with a stern countenance, he commanded him to be gone.

* Vita S. Thomæ, l. 1, c. 30. † Id. Ibid, c. 31. Henry, vol. 5, p. 350.

The Bishops now found themselves in a very critical situation. If they proceeded to sit in judgment on their Primate, they should incur the displeasure of the Pope; and if they refused, they would forfeit the favour of the King and the Barons; they begged that they might be allowed to hold a private consultation; which was granted. After mature deliberation, they agreed to renounce all subjection to Becket as their Primate,—to prosecute him for perjury before the Pope; and, if possible, to procure his deposition.

The Bishops reported their resolution to the King and Barons, who, not knowing that Becket had already obtained a bull from the Pope, absolving him from his oath, too rashly gave their consent.

The Bishops went in a body to communicate their resolution to the Archbishop, but he would not deign to give them any answer, except, “I hear,” which was followed by a profound silence. The King and Barons were not at all intimidated by the obstinacy of the Archbishop, but came to a resolution, that if he did not immediately give in his accounts, they would declare him guilty of perjury and treason. Robert, Earl of Leicester, was sent at the head of a deputation to communicate this resolution; and addressing himself to Becket, said,

“The King commands you to come immediately, and give in your accounts, or else hear your sentence.” On hearing which, Becket started upon his feet and exclaimed, “My sentence! No! my son, hear me first. “I was given to the church free, and discharged from all claims, when I was “elected Archbishop of Canterbury, and “therefore I never will give any account. “Besides, my son, neither law nor reason “permits sons to judge their father. I decline the jurisdiction of the King and “Barons, and appeal to God, and my lord “the Pope, by whom alone I am to be “judged. For you, my brethren and fellow- “Bishops, I summon you to appear before “the Pope, to be judged by him for having “obeyed men rather than God. I put myself, the church of Canterbury, and all “that belongs to it, under the protection of “God, and the Pope, under whose protection I depart hence,” On this he walked out of the hall in great state; his boldness having so amazed the assembly, that none had the courage to stop him. When he reached the street, he was received by a prodigious mob, who conducted him with loud acclamations. A circumstance very congenial to his vanity, and tended to make him still more inflexible.

Becket now began to devise the means of making his escape; and in order to conceal his intention, he sent three Bishops to the King, to ask permission for him to retire out of the kingdom; to which the King replied, that he would deliberate with his council on the subject, and give an answer next day. Becket, who never intended to wait the result of the King's deliberation, passed through a postern gate in the night, and left Northampton with only two monks in his company. After lurking in different places, and travelling only by night, he arrived at Sandwich, where he embarked on board a fisher-boat before dawn, on Tuesday, November 10th, (exactly two weeks after he left Northampton,) and that evening landed at Boulogne.*

The flight of the Archbishop produced a violent commotion through the land. His friends either concealed themselves or fled. The King convened a council of the Bishops and Barons, to consider what was most proper to be done under existing circumstances, when it was agreed to send a splendid embassy to the Pope, to prosecute the Archbishop, and, if possible, to procure his deposition. The ambassadors were furnished with a large sum of money, which they

* Vita S. Thomæ, l. 1, c. 35, l. 2, c. 2, Henry, vol. 5, p. 353.

knew to be the most powerful pleader in a papal court; also, with letters to the Earl of Flanders and the King of France, entreating those Princes not to afford the fugitive Prelate an asylum in their dominions. It was agreed to protect the friends and property of the Primate, till the result of this embassy should be known.

The King's ambassadors sailed from Dover about the same time that Becket sailed from Sandwich, and they both arrived at St. Omer's on the 11th of November. Becket concealed himself in a hermitage belonging to the abbey of St. Bertin, under the borrowed name of *Brother Christian*, until the departure of the King's ambassadors, when he resumed his own name, and was treated with the greatest respect and kindness by the Clergy and people of those parts.

The English ambassadors met with a very cold reception at the French court. Louis, who was a superstitious bigot, and a great admirer of Becket, with whom he kept up a private correspondence, was shocked at the following expression in King Henry's letter: "Thomas, late Archbishop of Canterbury." On reading which he exclaimed,—“Late Archbishop! Who hath deposed him? I am a King as well as your master, and yet I have no power to depose the meanest

“clerk in my dominions.” He refused to comply with any of the requisitions of the ambassadors, and told them plainly that he would protect the persecuted Prelate to the utmost of his power. The two monks who had accompanied Becket, followed the ambassadors to the court of France, where they were most graciously received by Louis, who promised his friendship and protection to their master; adding, “That it had always been the glory of the French Kings to protect the persecuted of all nations, especially the Clergy.”*

The ambassadors next proceeded to Sens, where the Pope then resided; and in this journey also, they were followed by the two monks, who were preferred with the first audience of His Holiness. One of them named Herbert, began his harangue in the following canting strain; “Holy father, “your son Joseph no longer reigns in “Egypt; but the Egyptians have almost “killed him, and forced him to flee.” When he described the persecutions which his master had endured in England, and the toils and dangers of his escape, the father of fathers (as he tells us) burst into tears, and said, “And doth your master still live? “He may claim the glory of a martyr, “though he is in the flesh.”†

* Vita S. Thomæ, l. 2, c. 7, † Ibid, c. 8. p. 72. Extr. Henry.

On the following day, the English ambassadors were admitted to an audience with the Pope and his Cardinals, when Robert Foliot, Bishop of London, who spoke first, was interrupted by the Pope for using some expressions which reflected on the conduct of the Archbishop. Hilary, Bishop of Chichester, was also put to silence by a loud laugh which was raised against him for having pronounced a latin word wrong. The other three Bishops said but little. The Earl of Arundel, having apologized for his ignorance of the Latin language, made a speech in English, in which he artfully extolled the authority of the Pope, before which, he said, all the world bowed; he magnified the veneration of his sovereign for the person and character of His Holiness, and observed, the present embassy, consisting of the most honourable persons in his kingdom was a proof; he also spoke in very respectful terms of the Archbishop, and said, that England might have been perfectly happy under a good Prince and an excellent Pastor, had it not been for this unhappy difference between them; and concluded with entreating the Pope to restore peace between them by commanding the Archbishop to return to England, and by

sending a legate thither to terminate all their disputes.*

This soothing speech was very graciously heard by the Pope, but after a consultation with the Cardinals, the ambassadors were informed that no answer could be given to their petition until the Archbishop had been heard. But the ambassadors insisted on a prompt reply, as the King had commanded them not to stay longer than three days. This positive demand was a puzzling point to His Holiness, who was apprehensive, that, as there then was another Pope, if he gave a flat denial, the King of England might abandon his party, and espouse the cause of his opponent. Some of the Cardinals, who had been secretly gained over by the ambassadors, pleaded earnestly for granting their petition; others pleaded that it would be equally imprudent and dishonourable to abandon the Archbishop, who had suffered so much for the immunities of the Clergy. At the close of their deliberations, the Pope repeated his former answer, on which the ambassadors left his court, and hastened back to England, where they arrived about Christmas, A. D. 1164.†

Becket, as soon as he was assured of the favour and protection of the King of France,

* Vita S. Thomæ, l. 2, c. 9. p. 75, 76. † Ibid, p. 76.

paid him a visit at Soissons, where the French court then resided, and was most affectionately received, and urged to accept an order on the royal treasury for every thing he needed during his stay in France. From Soissons he proceeded with a numerous retinue for Sens, which he entered in a kind of triumph, and was treated by the Pope with the greatest respect. At a solemn council of all the Cardinals and Prelates, Becket was seated at the Pope's right hand, and allowed to keep his seat while he pleaded his cause. Having, in the course of an artful speech, produced a copy of the constitutions of Clarendon, several of which were directly calculated to abridge the power of the Pope and Cardinals, the whole assembly expressed their abhorrence of them in the strongest terms, and at the same time passing the highest encomiums on the Archbishop, declared that his cause was the cause of God and the church, and ought to be supported.* Becket, with a view of further ingratiating himself with the Pope, resigned his Archbishopric into his hands, pretending that his conscience was much disquieted at having been advanced to that dignity by the influence of a temporal Prince. Some of the Cardinals, who had been bribed into the in-

* Vita S. Thomæ, p. 77, 78.

terest of the English court, proposed to accept the resignation, as the best way of settling the dispute ; but the majority rejected the proposal, declaring, that if Becket was abandoned, no Bishop would dare to *resist* his Prince, and the church would be ruined. The Pope with the advice of his Cardinals, restored the Archbishopric to Becket, appointing him a residence in the abbey of Pontigny in Burgandy.

When the ambassadors returned to England, and made their report, the King was highly offended both with the Pope and the Archbishop ; and that they might feel his resentment, he prohibited the payment of peter-pence, and commanded all clerks who presumed to appeal to the Pope to be imprisoned. He also commanded all the goods and revenues of the Archbishop, and of all the Clergy who adhered to him, to be seized ; and proceeded to confiscate the estates, and to banish the persons of all the Primate's friends, retainers, and relations, to the number of about four hundred, and compelled them to take an oath, that they would present themselves before Becket, in hopes that the sight of so many families involved in ruin on his account, might shake his resolution and induce him to submit. But this proved a very impolitic act, for it made the

King appear in the light of a cruel tyrant, and excited universal sympathy towards the Archbishop and his persecuted friends.

The Kings of France and England had an interview at Gizors, in Easter week, A. D. 1165, in which the affairs of Becket was the chief subject of their negotiations. But as Henry insisted upon his submission to the constitutions of Clarendon, and Louis refused to withdraw his protection from him, nothing was concluded.* About this time, an interview was proposed between King Henry and the Pope, but did not take place because the King objected to the Archbishop being present; to which His Holiness returned this haughty answer:—"That no
"man had a right to exclude any person
"from the presence of the sovereign Pon-
"tiff, whose prerogative it had always been,
"to protect oppressed exiles from the vio-
"lence of the wicked, and even from the
"rage of Princes."†

Becket employed himself during his residence at Pontigny, in exercises of devotion, and writing expostulatory letters to the King and Bishops of England,—in issuing excommunications against several officers of the crown,—in threatening even to excommunicate the King himself; a threatening

* Henry, vol. 5, p. 360. † Vita S. Thomæ, l. 2, c. 16, p. 84.

he would have executed without delay, had not the Pope, through policy, advised him to exercise a little longer forbearance with his Prince.

The Bishops and Clergy were alarmed at these violent proceedings, and still more violent threatenings, which induced the Bishop of Salisbury to write a letter in behalf of all the Clergy of his Province, to the Archbishop, in which they represented, with great freedom, his ingratitude to his gracious sovereign, who had raised him from a low condition to the highest honours;—the uncanonical means by which he had obtained his see;—the informality and severity of his censures already pronounced;—the injustice and danger of those which he meditated against the King;—and concluded with an appeal to the Pope against all his proceedings.*

This truly christian letter produced no good effect on the unbending mind of Becket, for he immediately commenced more spirited preparations for executing his threatenings. He acquainted the Pope by letter with his intentions, in which he painted the King of England in the most odious colours, as a cruel, impious, unrelenting persecutor, who had tried and condemned Christ at Northampton, in his person.†

* Epistol. S. Thomæ, p. 126. Vide Henry. † Ibid. p. 129.

Henry became much concerned when he heard of Becket's design, and called a council of his Barons and Prelates at Chinon in Touraine, to consider what was to be done to prevent his excommunication, or to guard against its consequences. After a long deliberation, it was thought the most expedient to appeal to the Pope; and two Bishops were sent to notify that appeal. On their arrival they were informed that Becket had gone a few days before to Soissons, to perform his devotions at the shrine of St. Dransius, the patron of combatants, to implore his protection in that dangerous conflict in which he was engaged with the King of England. This prevented them giving him a regular notification of the appeal.* In the mean time Henry sent orders to England to guard the sea-coasts, and search every person that came from the Continent, and if letters of excommunication or interdict were found upon any person, to punish him, if a Clergyman, by castration; if a layman, by death. So terrible to the greatest Princes, were the thunders of the church, in those days of darkness and superstition!

Becket was prevented from excommunicating King Henry by the interposition of the King of France; but on Whitsunday,

* Epistol S. Thomæ, Ep. 140.

A. D. 1166, at Vizelay, before a crowded audience, he published sentences of excommunication against all his ministers, and chief confidants ; and declared the impious constitutions of Clarendon null and void :—absolved all the Bishops of England from the unlawful oath they had taken to obey them, —and excommunicated all persons who paid them any regard. Upon these presumptuous proceedings the King threatened to expel from his dominions, all the monks of the Cistercian order, if they any longer entertained his enemy the Archbishop of Canterbury at Pontigny ; which obliged him to remove to Sens about Martinmas, A. D. 1166, where an honourable asylum was provided for him by the King of France. The pertinacity of Becket rendered ineffectual for a long time, all the efforts of the English Prelates, the Pope, and of the King of France, for terminating the contention between him and the King of England. At length the King's agents at Rome, obtained a soothing letter from the Pope to their master, dated December 20th, A. D. 1166, in which he informs him, that he had given a commission to two Cardinals to determine all controversies between that Prelate and the Bishops of England ;—that he had given his legates authority to absolve all the King's

servants and subjects who had been excommunicated ;—and that he had inhibited the Archbishop from issuing any censures against him, or any of his subjects during the time this cause was pending.

Nothing could exceed the consternation of Becket when he heard of this bull ; especially, as he was informed at the same time, that the King's agents had obtained copies of all the letters that he and his friends had written to the Pope against the King. To ascertain the truth of the report, he wrote to his agent at the court of Rome, to discover, if possible, how his affairs stood, and inform him accordingly, remarking, “ If those things which are reported be true, my lord the Pope hath suffocated and strangled not only me, but also himself and all the Clergy.”

Becket's affairs now appeared in a very bad condition, and had it not been for the conduct of the King of France, in all probability Henry would have brought the haughty Prelate to a proper submission.—But Louis was a weak minded bigot in every thing relating to religion, which could only be equalled by his enmity to the King of England. He expressed himself as being more displeased with the Pope, if possible, than even Becket, and declared that he would

not suffer the legates to enter his dominions, whom he was as much offended with as if they were come to pull the crown off his own head.

Though the legates left Rome in January, they did not arrive in France till the end of October, A.D. 1167, when a correspondence commenced between them and Becket, which brought to light the artful disingenuous conduct of the Pope, who stated in his letters to the King, that his legates had a commission to "Judge and determine;" but in his letters to the Archbishop, said they had a commission to "negociate a reconciliation." It appears that the Pope by vacillating between the two parties, encouraged Becket in his inflexible obstinacy, and made him more intolerable and arrogant than ever.

When the legates had their first interview with the King of England in the city of Maine, and acquainted him with their instructions, he became highly incensed at the Pope's conduct in giving them private instructions so different from what was expressed in his letters to the King. He affirmed likewise, that the Archbishop had given a false account to the Pope of the constitutions of Clarendon, which was confirmed by the English Bishops then present. The King further declared, that if any laws had

been made in his time inconsistent with the laws of the church, he was willing that they should be abolished; and at the request of the English Bishops, he consented that the legates should act either as judges or mediators between him and the Archbishop.

These preliminaries for a reconciliation being adjusted, the legates with difficulty procured an interview with Becket, November 17th, A. D. 1167, but he behaved with the greatest haughtiness imaginable; refusing to submit to them as judges, and declining to give them any ground to proceed upon as mediators, for to all his seeming concessions he added a nullifying proviso,—a saving of the honour of God,—of the apostolic see,—of all the liberties and of all the possessions of the church, which they knew the King would not admit, as it would create endless disputes.

When the legates reported to the King and the English Bishops, then with him in Normandy, what had passed between them and the Archbishop; that Prince and these Prelates protested that they had performed their part, in offering to submit to them either as judges or mediators, and as the Archbishop had not made a similar submission, they appealed to the Pope, and put themselves and the kingdom of England

under the immediate protection of the holy see, until the feast of St. Martin, in the following year. They also requested the legates to notify their appeal to the Archbishop, and to inhibit him from issuing any censures against them in the interval. With this request the legates complied, and prohibited the Archbishop, in their own, and in the Pope's name, from inflicting any censures on the King or kingdom of England during the time of the appeal.* Never was a hungry lion more enraged at having his prey torn from him when he was just ready to devour it, than Becket was at this prohibition. He complained of it to the Pope in the bitterest terms, and charged King Henry with having bribed the legates.

The prohibition of the Pope's legates produced a suspension of hostilities for a time between the King and Becket, who was thereby prevented from launching the thunders of the church against his sovereign.—In the mean time, the Earl of Flanders made an attempt to put an end to this violent dispute, to effect which, he brought Becket with him to a place where a conference was to be held between the Kings of France and England, about Midsummer, A. D. 1161. But Henry, being secured

* Epist. S. Thomæ, l. 2, Ep. 28-30. Extr. Henry, vol. 5, p. 371.

from church censures by the prohibition of the legates ; and still farther defended by a bull he had received from the Pope, suspending the Archbishop's spiritual authority over him and his subjects till he had recovered his favour, would not so much as admit Becket into his presence. He had therefore to return to the place of his retirement, under the tormenting effects of mortified pride and impotent resentment.

On the sixth of January, A. D. 1169, the Kings of France and England held another conference, when an attempt was again made to bring about a reconciliation between Becket and his sovereign. To accomplish this, great pains were taken by the King of France, Bernard de Corillo, and others, to persuade the haughty Prelate to behave in a proper and respectful manner to his much offended Prince. They at length so far prevailed, that when he was introduced to the King, he fell upon his knees, and said, " I submit myself to the mercy of God and the King, to the honour of God and the King," a form of words very artfully contrived, and full of ambiguity. Henry objected to this form of submission, and insisted that the Archbishop should promise in plain words, " That he would obey those laws and customs which the holy Arch-

“ bishops of Canterbury had obeyed in the
“ times of former Kings, and which he had
“ sworn to obey.” This Becket refused to
do ; alleging that his predecessors had never
been pressed to make such a promise. But
the King insisted upon it, and many of the
nobles and Bishops earnestly urging him to
comply, he at last consented to make the
promise required, with a saving of the ho-
nour of God and of the rights of his order.
The King, well knowing what was intended
by the saving clause, rejected this offer ;
and, addressing himself to the King of
France, in a very emphatic manner, said,
“ My liege lord, I earnestly entreat your
“ attention. I know that whatever happens
“ to displease him, he will say is contrary
“ to the honour of God, and the rights of
“ his order. But that it may appear to all
“ the world that I do not oppose the honour
“ of God, or the real rights of his order, I
“ here make this offer :—There have been
“ many Kings of England before me, some
“ weaker and others greater than I am ;
“ there have been also many great and holy
“ men, Archbishops of Canterbury before
“ him ; let him behave towards me as the
“ greatest and most holy of his predecessors
“ behaved towards the weakest of mine and
“ I am satisfied.”*

* Vita S. Thomæ, l. 2, c. 25.

This speech produced a powerful effect on the audience, who cried out, that the King's concessions were sufficient ; and the Archbishop remaining silent, the King of France added, " My lord Archbishop, why do you hesitate ? Peace is now in your offer." But Becket evinced a spirit of haughty and unyielding obstinacy, equally proof against either the threats of his enemies, or the entreaties of his friends ; and the conference closed without a reconciliation. The French King, and many of the nobility, were disgusted with the conduct of Becket, and pronounced him to be a man of the most consummate pride and obstinacy.

A third attempt to effect a reconciliation between Henry and the Archbishop, was made in the beginning of the year A. D. 1169, at an interview between the two Kings of France and England. In order to intimidate Henry into a compliance, a bull was delivered to him from the Pope, declaring, that if he was not reconciled to the Archbishop before the beginning of next Lent, he would restore the Prelate to the full exercise of his spiritual authority over him and his kingdom. Henry proposed to the Pope's agents, who were appointed to act as mediators in this negotiation, that the Archbishop should return into England, and enjoy all

the emoluments of his see, on condition that he would promise to behave towards him as former Archbishops had behaved towards former Kings. Becket consented to make that promise with a saving of the right of his order; but the King as positively objected this saving, which rendered abortive, all the efforts of the mediators to bring about a reconciliation.

Becket now began to give full vent to his spleen. In his letters to the Pope, he speaks of Henry as being a more cruel and persecuting tyrant than Herod. As soon as Lent commenced, he resumed the exercise of his spiritual authority; and without consulting the Pope, he thundered out sentences of excommunication against the Bishops of London and Salisbury, the Archdeacon of Canterbury, and his vicar; Hugh, Earl of Chester, Richard de Lucey, Chief Justiciary, &c. &c.*

While Becket was thundering out his anathemas, Henry was not inactive. He empowered his agents to offer the Pope a present of ten thousand marks, if he would translate Becket from Canterbury to some other see,—to procure him peace with the Emperor and Roman nobility,—and to allow the Pope to appoint an Archbishop for

* Epistol S. Thomæ, Ep. 79, 80, 1. 3.

Canterbury, and to fill all the other sees then vacant in England. The Pope declined accepting these tempting offers, but sent two nuncios, Vivian, Archdeacon of Rome, and Gratian, Subdeacon, into Normandy, in August, A. D. 1169, to negotiate a peace between the King and the Archbishop. These nuncios had several conferences with Henry at different places, but all proving unsuccessful, they left Normandy soon after Michaelmas.

After their departure, Henry fearing what might follow, sent a messenger after Vivian with a letter, entreating him to return and resume his negotiations, encouraging him to believe they would be crowned with success. Vivian complied with this request, to the no small mortification of Becket, who was impatient to use the sword of his spiritual power. The nuncio sent a letter to Becket requiring him to attend an interview of the Kings of France and England, which was to be held at St. Deny's, November 15th, A. D. 1169. On his arrival, he sent a petition to the King, containing the terms on which he was willing to be reconciled to his sovereign, namely, that himself and all who had followed his fortunes, should be restored to all the rights and possessions which they had enjoyed before they left England. He

right to perform. On the receipt of this bull, Henry hasted into England, to carry into execution his favourite design of crowning his son. When Becket heard what the Pope had granted to Henry, it enraged him almost to madness. He wrote to the Pope and Cardinals, and told them in the plainest terms, that they had been bribed,—that they had absolved the devil and crucified Christ,—and that he would make no more applications to Rome, where none but wicked men prevailed.

The King having accomplished the coronation of his son, returned to the continent and held several conferences with the nuncios, and when all the preliminaries for a reconciliation were adjusted, the Archbishop was conducted in great state to an audience of his Sovereign, July 22nd, A. D. 1170, in a meadow near Fretville, where the French and English courts, with a prodigious multitude of people of all ranks were assembled. The conduct of the King on this occasion, was singularly condescending ; but Becket's haughty and resentful temper was so little impressed by it, that he returned Henry's civility and condescension with complaints and remonstrances ; especially, that of permitting his son to be crowned by the Archbishop of York. After extorting from the

King a promise to repair all the injuries that had been done to the church, the Archbishop dismounted to throw himself at his feet; but Henry prevented him, and stooped so low as to hold his stirrup, and assist him in remounting. The terms of reconciliation were then read by the Archbishop of Sens, and ratified by the King, but it was far from being cordial on the part of Becket; for when the King desired him to declare his forgiveness of all who had incurred his displeasure in the late unhappy dispute, as he had now forgiven, all who had offended him. But to this most reasonable proposal, Becket returned an evasive answer.

The terms of peace being thus ratified, Henry sent letters to the young King, acquainting him with the terms, and commanding, that all their estates and possessions should be restored to the Archbishop and his exiled adherents. When Becket's agents arrived in England, they met with a very cold reception; their company was shunned, and their report of peace not credited,—that when they delivered the royal mandate to the young King, he told them to return for an answer in ten days. Becket made bitter complaints to the King about the delay, and sent the letters he had received from his agents to the Pope, with whom

he now stood in the highest degree of favour, under whose authority he was permitted to inflict the highest censures on his opponents. The Archbishop received this authority from the Pope while waiting at Whitsand for a passage to England ; on which he immediately unsheathed the sword of his spiritual power, and sent over three bulls, one for suspending the Archbishop of York for crowning the young King ; and two for excommunicating the Bishops of London and Salisbury, for having assisted at the ceremony. Nothing could be more agreeable to his vindictive temper, than the execution of these sentences ; but they excited universal indignation against him, and as will be seen in the sequel, proved the cause of his ruin.

On his reaching the English shore, December 1st, A. D. 1170, attempts were made to prevent his landing, and some men in arms, commanded him in a very imperious tone, to absolve the excommunicated Bishops. In his way to Canterbury he was accompanied by a great multitude of people, and entered in a kind of triumph, amidst the acclamations of his attendants.* Soon after his arrival he was waited upon with an order issued by the young King, demanding

* Epist. S. Thomæ, l. 5, Ep. 73. Extr. Henry, vol. 5, p. 386.

of him to absolve the excommunicated Bishops. Becket refusing to remove the censures he had inflicted on those Bishops who assisted at the coronation, very much incensed the young King, as it called in question its validity.

After spending a few days at Canterbury, he set out to visit the young King, whose court was at Woodstock ; as he approached London, of which he was a native, great crowds of people conducted him to his lodgings in Southwark, with loud acclamations ; in return for which he scattered amongst them both money and episcopal benedictions. Here his vanity was soon mortified by a message from the young King, forbidding him to proceed any further, or to enter any royal town or castle ; and commanding him to return immediately to Canterbury, and confine himself within the precincts of his church. After his return to Canterbury, he found himself deserted by many of his friends who were daily informing him of the insults they received, and the depredations that were committed upon his estates, which brought such gloomy apprehensions on his mind, that he one day said to one of his friends, " I am now convinced that this quarrel will not end without blood ; and I

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am determined to die for the liberties of the church.”

When the excommunicated Bishops arrived in Normandy, they threw themselves at the King's feet, imploring his protection from the disgrace and ruin with which they were threatened by the Primate, and painting the violence of his proceedings in such strong colours, that Henry fell into one of those paroxysms of passion to which he was subject, in the height of which he exclaimed, “ Shall this fellow, who came to court upon a lame horse, with all his estate in a wale behind him, trample upon his King, the royal family, and the whole kingdom? Will none of all those lazy cowardly knights whom I maintain, deliver me from this turbulent Priest?”*

This passionate exclamation made too deep an impression on those who heard it, particularly on the four following Barons: Reginald Fitz-Urse, William de Tracy, Hugh de Morvil, and Richard Breto, who formed a resolution either to terrify the Archbishop into subjection, or put him to death. Having concerted their plan, they set out for Canterbury, and to prevent suspicion took different routes, but all arrived at the castle of Randle de Broc, about six miles

* Vita S. Thomæ, l. 3, c. 10, p. 118.

from Canterbury on the same day, December 28th, A. D. 1170. On the following day they proceeded to the city, accompanied by a body of resolute men, with arms concealed under their clothes. The four Barons with twelve of the men, were admitted into the Archbishop's apartment, where he was conversing with some of his Clergy. Reginald Fitz-Urse, told the Archbishop that they were sent by the King to command him to absolve the Prelates and others, whom he had excommunicated; and then go to Winchester, and make satisfaction to the young King, whom he had endeavoured to dethrone. A long and violent altercation followed, in the course of which, it was plainly intimated to Becket, that if he did not comply his life was in danger, but he persisted the more resolutely in his refusal. The Barons, upon their departure, charged Becket's servants not to let him flee; on which he cried out vehemently, "Flee! I will never flee from any man living, I am not come to flee, but to defy the rage of impious assassins."* After their departure, his friends blamed him for having inflamed the fury of his enemies by the roughness of his answers, and earnestly pressed him to make his escape; but he haughtily replied

* Vita S. Thomæ, l. 3, c. 14.

"I have no need of your advice.—I know what I ought to do."

The Barons finding their threats ineffectual, put on their coats of mail, and taking each a sword in his right hand, and an axe in his left, returned to the palace, but found the gate shut. When they were preparing to break it open, Robert de Broc conducted them up a back stair and let them in at a window. A cry then arose, "they are armed! they are armed!" on which the Clergy hurried the Archbishop almost by force into the church, hoping that the sacredness of the place would protect him from violence. They would also have shut the door, but he cried out,—“Begone, ye cowards! I charge you on your obedience do not shut the door. What! will you make a castle of a church?” The conspirators having searched the palace, came to the church, and one of them exclaiming, “Where is that traitor? where is the Archbishop?” Becket advanced boldly saying, “Here I am, an Archbishop, but no traitor!” “Flee,” cried the conspirator, “or you are a dead man.” “I will never flee,” replied Becket. William de Tracy then took hold of his robe and said, “You are my prisoner, come along with me.” But Becket clung so fast to one of the pillars of the choir, that

they could not make him quit his hold ; and during the struggle, he seized Tracy by the collar, and almost threw him down. Enraged at this resistance, Tracy aimed a blow with his sword, which almost cut off the arm of Edward Grime, one of the monks of Canterbury, in trying to ward off the blow, which also wounded the Archbishop in the head. Becket offered no further resistance, but joining his hands in a posture of prayer, commended his own soul, and the cause of the church, to God, and the saints of that cathedral. The other three conspirators rushed upon him, and each levelled a blow at his head, by which his skull was cloven almost in two, and his brains scattered about the pavement of the church.*

Thus fell Thomas Becket, December 29th, A. D. 1170, in the fifty-third year of his age, and ninth of his Pontificate. Thomas Becket, says Lord Littleton, was “ a man of great talents, of elevated thoughts, and of invincible courage ; but of a most violent and turbulent spirit ; excessively passionate, haughty, and vain-glorious ;† in his reso-

* Stephanides Vita S. Thomæ, p. 81-87. Extr. Henry, vol. 2, p. 391.

† Some idea may be formed of the vanity and pride of the Prelate, from the pompous style in which he travelled as related by William Fitz-Stephen. He was attended with about two hun-

also claimed all the churches and prebends belonging to Canterbury, that had become vacant since he left, that he might dispose of them as he pleased. To the last article Henry was very much opposed; and the whole petition was couched in such ambiguous terms, that he rejected it altogether, and proposed the following plain terms:—“That the Archbishop should have his church, and all the possessions of it that had been held by his predecessors, and as they had been held by them.”* This form was rejected by the Archbishop, and Vivian having failed in his second attempt to bring about a reconciliation, returned into Italy, greatly dissatisfied with the two unbending opponents.

Henry now expected that a sentence of excommunication against himself, and an interdict on his kingdom, would be pronounced immediately by the infuriated Archbishop. To prevent these sentences from being executed, he sent over into England his royal injunctions, forbidding all intercourse between his subjects and the Pope or Archbishop; declaring it high treason to bring any interdict from either of them into England. He also commanded, that Peterpence should be paid into the royal treasury

* Epist. S. Thomæ, 1. 3, Ep. 62.

and not to the Pope.* To render these injunctions more effectual, every person was compelled to take an oath to observe them, which was cheerfully done by the laity of all ranks, but generally refused by the Clergy.

The King, wearied with the pertinacity of Becket, made application to the papal court, to have the terms of an accommodation between him and the Archbishop settled with the Pope in person; when His Holiness expressed his approbation of the following form which was proposed to him. "That
"for the love of God, of the Pope, and of
"the church of Rome, the King would permit the Archbishop to return to his church
"in safety, and to have and hold it in peace,
"together with all the possessions he had
"before he left England. The same to all
"who were in exile on his account." The Pope commissioned the Archbishop of Rouen and the Bishop of Nevers to accomplish this difficult task, and as a means of reconciliation, they were authorized to absolve all those whom Becket had excommunicated.

The King's agent succeeded in obtaining for him another favour from His Holiness. This was a bull empowering Roger, Archbishop of York, to crown Prince Henry; an office which Becket claimed the exclusive

* Gervas Chron, apud X. Script. col. 1409.

racter. Though his murderers were highly criminal, his death was very seasonable, and probably prevented much mischief and confusion."*

The honours paid to the memory of Becket, after his death, were extravagant beyond all bounds, and remains on record as an evidence of the superstition and credulity which prevailed at the period in which it occurred. All divine offices were suspended for nearly a year in the church where it happened; and the church itself was, by order of the Pope, reconsecrated. The King of England, to whose commands it was generally imputed, was represented as "that horrible persecutor of God, who exceeded Nero in cruelty, Julian in perfidy, and Judas in treachery;" and the Pope was loudly called upon by the Kings of France, and many Prelates, to draw the sword of St. Peter, and to inflict some exquisite punishment upon him. But none expressed greater grief and horror at this deed than Henry himself, who broke out into the loudest lamentations, refused to see any company, or admit of any consolation for three days; a pathetic narrative of which was transmitted to the Pope by the Bishop of Lizieux, declaring his innocence in the strongest terms,

* Dr. Henry, vol. 5, p. 392.

King a promise to repair all the injuries that had been done to the church, the Archbishop dismounted to throw himself at his feet; but Henry prevented him, and stooped so low as to hold his stirrup, and assist him in remounting. The terms of reconciliation were then read by the Archbishop of Sens, and ratified by the King, but it was far from being cordial on the part of Becket; for when the King desired him to declare his forgiveness of all who had incurred his displeasure in the late unhappy dispute, as he had now forgiven, all who had offended him. But to this most reasonable proposal, Becket returned an evasive answer.

The terms of peace being thus ratified, Henry sent letters to the young King, acquainting him with the terms, and commanding, that all their estates and possessions should be restored to the Archbishop and his exiled adherents. When Becket's agents arrived in England, they met with a very cold reception; their company was shunned, and their report of peace not credited,—that when they delivered the royal mandate to the young King, he told them to return for an answer in ten days. Becket made bitter complaints to the King about the delay, and sent the letters he had received from his agents to the Pope, with whom

CHAPTER XIII.

The Pope sends his legate to settle the terms of reconciliation with Henry for the murder of Becket.—Disputes between the King and the monks at Canterbury, about the election of an Archbishop.—Conspiracy against Henry by his Son.—Normandy invaded by the King of France, &c.—Death of the Earl of Boulogne, and retreat of the Earl of Flanders.—The King of France retreats and leaves his camp equipage.—Earl of Chester, &c. taken at the Castle of Doll.—King of Scotland taken prisoner before Alnwick Castle.—Henry's visit to the tomb of T. Becket.—Council at Westminster.

Henry being now relieved from his apprehensions of the thunders of the church, which in those days of darkness and superstition made the greatest Monarchs tremble; he left Normandy and arrived in England, August 7th, A. D. 1172, where he found every thing in profound tranquillity. Henry immediately entered upon his expedition for the conquest of Ireland, and was expecting to finish its subjugation in a few months, when he was informed that His Holiness had sent two Cardinals, Albert and Theodwin, to be his legates to settle the affair concerning the murder of Becket. On hearing of their arrival in Normandy, he immediately

set out to meet them ; and after a few altercatory conferences, all the conditions were amicably settled at Avranches, September 18th, 1172, when the King, in the presence of the legates, and a great assembly of Princes, Prelates, Nobles, and others, swore on the gospels, and the relicks of the saints, in the church of St. Andrew, "that he had "neither commanded nor desired the death "of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and that "when he heard it he was very much "grieved." But as he was afraid that his passionate expressions had excited the murderers of the Archbishop to perpetrate that horrid deed, he consented to the following conditions to atone for his offence, and to procure a full reconciliation with the church.

1. To give to the Knights-templars as much money as would pay two hundred Knights for one year to serve in the Holy Land ; and at next Christmas, to take the cross, and go in person to the Holy Land the following summer, unless he obtained a dispensation from the Pope.

2. To permit appeals to be made to the Pope, in good faith, and without fraud ; but if he suspected any of the appellants of ill intentions, he might compel them to give security that they would attempt nothing to the detriment of him or his kingdom.

3. To abolish such evil customs against the church as had been introduced in his own time.

4. To restore all the possessions of the church of Canterbury, and of all the Clergy and laity of both sexes, who had been deprived of their estates on account of the late Archbishop. Both the King and his son at the same time swore, that they would adhere to Pope Alexander as long as he treated them as Christian and Catholic Kings.*

Thus terminated this memorable struggle between the crown and the mitre, much less to the disadvantage of the former than could have been expected.

This long litigated affair between the Pope and King Henry, concerning the murder of Becket, being brought to a close, the attention of the King and kingdom was turned to the choice of an Archbishop of Canterbury, and Primate of England. On the return of the young King from Normandy, Odo, Prior of Canterbury, was called to court, to consult on the subject; but he pretended that the monks of that Cathedral had the sole right of electing an Archbishop, to the exclusion both of the King and the Bishops

* Epist. S. Thomæ, l. 5. Ep. 88, 89. Vita S. Thomæ, p. 147, 148. Hoveden Annal, fol. 303, 304. Dr. Henry, vol. 5, Art. Relig. chap. 2, sect. 3.

of the province. On this he was ordered home that he and the monks might take the subject into their more serious consideration, and report the result of their deliberations. In about three weeks after he returned to the court, and reported that the monks would not relinquish their claim. He was then commanded to wait upon the old King in Normandy, with which he complied ; and on communicating the object of his visit, the King was very much disconcerted. Henry was aware that if the choice of an Archbishop was left to the monks, who were professed admirers of Becket, it would fall upon some person of the same principles, whose violent measures might again disturb the peace of the nation. The King used every persuasion, and exerted every art in his power to prevail on Odo to consent to the election of the Bishop of Baieux, who was a man of a most amiable disposition ; but all his entreaties had no effect upon the hard-hearted monk, who returned to England as inflexible as he left it.

The monks persisted in their claim to the exclusive right to elect an Archbishop, which was pointedly opposed by the King ; till they at last began to fear that if they did not yield a little, some violent measures would be adopted, to prevent which they held a

VOL. II. H

chapter, in which it was agreed to propose three persons to the King, of which he might chose one to be the Archbishop. This proposal was made to Richard de Lucy, high Justiciary and Regent of the kingdom, who embraced it with joy, and summoned an assembly of the Bishops and monks to meet in London in February, when Roger Abbot of Bec, was unanimously elected.— This election was approved and confirmed by the King, but was defeated by the positive refusal of the Abbot to accept the office.

On his refusal another assembly of Bishops and monks met in London, about the end of April, when the six vacant sees of Winchester, Ely, Hereford, Bath, Chichester, and Lincoln, were filled up by the following persons, Richard de Ivicestre, Archdeacon of Poitiers, Geoffrey Redel, Archdeacon (commonly called by Becket, Archdevil,) of Canterbury, Robert Foliot, Reginald, son of Joceline,* Bishop of Salisbury, John of Greenford, and Geoffrey, the King's natural son by the fair Rosamond. These persons were all very agreeable to the King, and some of them had been the most active opposers of the late Primate. But the

* It appears that if the Pope prohibited a Bishop from marrying a wife, he would grant him an indulgence to keep a concubine, and then allow his illegitimate sons to be made Bishops.

monks and Bishops were still at variance about the right of electing an Archbishop ; at length the Chief Justiciary contrived to make the choice of the monks fall upon a person who he knew the King would approve, and after several warm debates they proposed Richard, Prior of Dover, to be their Archbishop ; who being approved of by the Bishops, and by the Chief Justiciary, in the King's name, was declared duly elected.

The Archbishop-elect made his public entry into Canterbury, on Saturday June 14th, and was to have been consecrated the day after, but it was prevented by an unexpected obstacle. The Bishops who attended to assist at the consecration, received a letter from the young King, who was then in open rebellion against his father, protesting against the late election, and acquainting them that he had appealed against it and the other Bishops lately elected to the Pope. It was therefore thought best to defer the consecration, and for the Archbishop-elect to go and plead his own and the cause of the other Bishops before the Pope at Rome.

The sentiment of St. Augustine, (*Lib. Confess.*) when he says, "The glory of the world is a deceitful sweetness, a fruitless labour, a perpetual fear, a dangerous honour,"

was seldom more affectingly verified than in this period of the life of Henry II. He was in the prime of life,—had a numerous family of sons and daughters, of whom he was remarkably fond, and for whom he had made the most ample provisions,—his extensive dominions were in a state of the most profound tranquillity, and perfect submission to his authority,—and his friendship was courted by all the Princes of Europe. Under this sunshine of prosperity a storm had for some time been gathering, which was just ready to burst upon him with all the desolating violence of a tornado. The King was passionately fond of his oldest son Henry, and had him crowned at the age of fifteen. The son had some good, but many bad qualities. His vanity and ambition were unbounded, and made him impatient to reign independent of his father. The scheme was formed and every facility for its execution afforded by the French court. The Kings of France, and Scotland,—the Earls of Flanders, Blois, and Boulogne,—the two young Princes, Richard and Geoffrey, together with a number of the most powerful Barons, both in England and in all the Provinces on the Continent, were brought into this conspiracy.

The revolutionary arrangements being ready, the young King took his flight to the court of France, where he was soon followed by his brothers Richard and Geoffrey, and a number of the Barons of Normandy and other countries; in short, the defection from King Henry was so great that he scarcely knew whom to trust, and almost every one considered his to be a hopeless case. Never did Henry's wisdom and valour appear to so great advantage as on this trying occasion. He sent to the governors of all his towns and castles, to make suitable preparation for their defence, and in a short time raised a very powerful army.

Immediately after Easter the flames of war broke out in different places. The King of France, with young Henry, entered Normandy at the head of a powerful army, and at the same time, the Earls of Flanders and Boulogne, entered it on the other side. But he who hath said, *Honour thy father and thy mother*, by an evident providential interference, baffled the united skill, and weakened the combined strength of the conspirators, so that the rebel son saw them melt away before the small but loyal army of his Royal Father. The Earl of Boulogne received a wound of which he died in a few days,—his brother, the Earl of Flanders, re-

tired with his own and the troops of Boulogne ;—the King of France who was besieging the city of Verneuil, on hearing of the ill success of his allies, and that King Henry was on his march to relieve the city, he raised the siege with such precipitation that Henry had nothing to do but take possession of a deserted camp with all its equipage. Henry sent a body of troops into the Province of Brittany, who defeated the rebels in a pitched battle, and shut up all the chiefs in the castle of Doll, when the King took the Earl of Chester, the Baron de Fongers, and about a hundred other nobles who surrendered at discretion, August 26th, A. D. 1173.

The same kind providence which crowned with success the arms of King Henry on the Continent, was not less propitious to his cause in England.

The King of Scotland invaded the north of England with a numerous army, committing the most sanguinary and atrocious deeds wherever they came. The King had sent out the bulk of his forces in three bodies, to plunder the adjacent countries, whilst he encamped with his household troops before Alnwick Castle. The famous Ranulph de Glanville, then Sheriff of Yorkshire, collected a choice body of about four

hundred Knights, with which he arrived at Newcastle in the evening of July 12th, A.D. 1174. He approached the enemies' camp next morning under cover of a thick fog, and found the King of Scots, with about seventy Knights, engaged in the fashionable exercise of tilting in a neighbouring field. The sight of these armed troops rather animated than alarmed the King, who mistook them for the troops of Duncan, Earl of Fife. When he was convinced of his mistake he was so far from betraying any signs of fear, that, shaking his spear, and crying to his attendants, "it will now be seen who is a good Knight," he boldly advanced to the attack. But his horse being killed in the first encounter, he was thrown to the ground and taken prisoner. This closed the contest, as all his followers either fled or yielded to be taken prisoners.

This proved to be one of the most momentous events in the British history. The captivity of the King of Scots, proved a death blow to all the schemes of the rebel confederates, and almost in a moment, hushed into the calm of peace, all the desolating confusion of an intestine war. King Henry having put his territories on the Continent into a good state of defence, embarked at Barflour, July 8th, and landed that evening at Southampton.

From what motives, we know not, but he hastened to Canterbury to pay his devotions at the shrine of Thomas Becket, who was now considered as the guardian of the English nation and the most favourite object of their adoration. When the King came to a place three miles from Canterbury, he alighted, and walked barefoot as a pilgrim to the cathedral. Having spent a whole day and night in fasting and prayer before the tomb of Becket, he then exposed his naked shoulders to the flagellations of the monks; a discipline that was never heard of in the Christian Church, till the latter end of the eleventh century, and had not men learnt to consecrate their own absurdities, and to set up their own inventions, it would most certainly have continued unknown to this very day. Henry having received absolution of the monks, he immediately set out for London, and that night received the pleasing information of the captivity of the King of Scotland, as before narrated.*

When Richard the elect of Canterbury arrived at Rome, he found the papal court much divided between the parties of Henry and his rebellious sons. After he had waited long, and made many liberal presents, he not only had his election confirmed, but

* W. Neubrigen, l. 2, c. 35.

was also appointed the Pope's legate in England.

The King having settled his affairs, and received his sons again into favour, the Archbishop of Canterbury convened a council of the English Clergy which met at Westminster, May 28th, 1175. In this council, eighteen canons collected from the ancient councils and latter decrees and epistles of the Bishops of Rome, were confirmed by the authority of both the Kings, and of the Barons of the Kingdom who were present at the council. The first of these canons enjoins celibacy on all the Clergy above the rank of Subdeacons, and forbids a son to succeed his father in any ecclesiastical promotion. This decree is a sufficient proof that all the severe canons that had been made against the marriages of the Clergy, had hitherto been ineffectual. The second prohibits the Clergy from frequenting public houses, except when they are on a journey. The third forbids ecclesiastics from holding civil offices. The fourth enjoins the Clergy to dress becoming their character, and authorizes the Archdeacon to crop such of them as wear long hair. The seventh forbids any money being taken by the Clergy for chrism, baptism, eucharist, extreme unction, burial, conferring orders, or receiving the profes-

sion of the religious. The fifteenth forbids the administering the sacramental bread steeped in wine : and the seventeenth forbids the consecration of the eucharist in any thing else but gold or silver, &c. &c.

Roger, Archbishop of York, was not present at this council, but sent some of his Clergy, to claim for him a right to carry his cross erect within the Province of Canterbury, and to demand the subjection of the Bishops of Hereford, Lincoln, Worcester, and Chester, as their Metropolitan. Both these claims were rejected ; the first was referred to the decision of the Archbishop of Rhoan, and for the space of five years, during which the dispute was to be finally determined, all animosities between the contending parties were to be laid aside. The Bishops appealed against his claims to the Pope. The injunction to lay aside " all animosities for five years," had but little effect on the two Archbishops ; for at a council held that year, a serious quarrel arose between them about sitting at the right hand of the legate. The Primate had taken his seat on the right of the legate when the Archbishop of York entered, who, on attempting to thrust the Primate out of his place, a violent struggle ensued, in which his grace of York was thrown down on the pavement,

and not a little bruised, his habit torn, and his mitre broken in pieces.* But we shall not take upon us to determine whether Roger beat Richard, or Richard beat Roger, but the tumult was so great, that the legate retired in a fright, and the council broke up in confusion. Both Prelates appealed to the Pope, and complained of each other to the King, who at first, was much incensed against the Archbishop of Canterbury; but on being better informed, he endeavoured to reconcile the two enraged Prelates, and so far succeeded as to prevail on them to withdraw their appeals to the Pope, and promise to live peaceably for the future.

Before the legate left England, the King agreed to the four following articles:—"I. That no Clergyman for the time to come, should be carried in person before a secular judge, for any crime or transgression; unless for abuses of the forest, or for such services, as by reason of some fee they owed to the King, or other secular lord. II. That no Archbishopric, Bishopric, or Abbey, should be detained in the King's hands above a year, unless there was an apparent necessity for it. III. That such persons as should confess, or be convicted of killing a Clergyman, should be punished

* Warner's Eccles. Hist. vol. 1, p. 387.

“ in the presence of the Bishop. IV. That
“ a Clergyman should not be obliged to de-
“ fend himself by duel.”

By this act the King surrendered to the
see of Rome what the Pope had so long
been aiming at, namely, to discharge the
Clergy from the laws of the state in which
they live, that he might use them to better
advantage in humbling their several Princes,
and promoting the absolute power of the
Pope over both Church and State.

CHAPTER XIV.

The policy of the Pope in giving encouragement to disputes between inferiors and their superiors that their appeals might be made to him.—Schism in the papacy terminated.—Council of Lateran.—The Archbishop's letter to the Pope.—A Priest murdered by a man and his wife, who go to Rome to be absolved.—The King of France visits the tomb of St. Thomas Becket.—Death of Pope Alexander III, who is succeeded by Lucius III.—Applies to the English for money to defend St. Peter.—The Pope appoints a council at Caen.—Disputes with the monks of Canterbury about electing an Archbishop.—Baldwin elected to the see of Canterbury.—Building of Church and convent at Hackington.—The monks prevail on the Pope to compel Baldwin to demolish the building, who bought the manor of Lambeth and built a place with the materials.—Death and Character of Henry II.

The effects of the King's conduct in yielding up the long contested point, were soon severely felt as the King had thereby, put it out of his power to preserve the rights of either the crown or the Church of England. The interests of the Church and state were now divided; the one headed by the Bishops of Rome, and the other by the King's. These two separate powers were at perpetual variance with each other; and by the undue influence of the see of Rome,

the Clergy became parties in the most unnatural, and scandalous usurpation of the rights of the crown and church of England. It was the policy of the court of Rome to countenance the strifes and contentions which arose either in church or state, in order that the parties concerned might make their appeals to the Pope, which greatly increased both his revenues and authority over all the offices and orders in the state. About this time, the Archbishop of Canterbury had to feel the effects of the flagitious conduct of the Pope, in not only supporting the monks in their rebellion against his authority, but by putting them in a condition to hold him at defiance, and insult him in his own cathedral. The monks of Canterbury having a quarrel with their Prior, applied to the Pope and got him deprived ; they then choose one Roger in his room, who being inflated with the spirit of his office, he sent and demanded the Archbishop to come to Canterbury to give him his benediction. The Archbishop informed him, that it was the duty of the Priors of monasteries to attend the Archbishop wherever he should appoint, but that he would come on condition he would make the same profession of canonical obedience to his grace, as had been always made to his predecessors. This haughty monk treated

the mild reply of the Archbishop with contempt, and instead of conforming to the established order of the church, he hasted to Rome, where he knew he should meet with that support which would enable him successfully to oppose the Primate. The Prior was graciously received by the Roman Pontiff, who justified his conduct in opposing the Primate, invested him with the ring and mitre, the ensigns of his authority, and sent a mandate to the Archbishop, to go down to the monastery to give the Prior his benediction, without requiring of him any profession of canonical obedience. On the Archbishop refusing to obey a mandate so derogatory to his authority, the Prior went back to Rome and there received his benediction.*

The schism which had subsisted in the church of Rome near eighteen years, was terminated this year, A. D. 1177, by the degradation of Calixtus the Antipope, and the submission of Frederic, Emperor of Germany, to Pope Alexander. This important transaction was concluded at an interview between the Pope and the Emperor in the city of Venice, when the pride of the Pontiff was not a little flattered by the honours paid to him by the Emperor, who gave him

* Warner's Eccles. Hist. vol. 1, p. 390.

the right hand in all processions, and held his stirrup when he mounted his horse, a pompous account of which he wrote to the two English Archbishops.*

The overthrow of the antipope brought a great accession of wealth and power to the victorious Pontiff; who, to make a more splendid exhibition of his own greatness, summoned all the Archbishops, Bishops, and Abbots, to attend a general council to be held at Rome in the spring of A.D. 1179. From several Scotch and Irish Bishops who passed through England in their way to this council, Henry exacted an oath, that they would attempt nothing against him, or his kingdom, and that they would return the same way.† Only four English Bishops attended this council, those of Durham, Oxford, Hereford, and Bath, as the English Prelates claimed a privilege of being represented by four of their number in all general councils. The Archbishop of Canterbury had not forgot the conduct of His Holiness in the contest he had with the Prior, and to shew how little he regarded the papal mandate, when he had got as far as Paris on his way to Rome, he returned back again. But the Pope having nothing now to fear from a

* Hoveden, col. 1, p. 325. † Chron. J. Brompt. inter. X Scrip. col. 1138.

rival, he made the absent Prelates pay dear for their temerity, as he imposed a heavy fine upon all the absentees. The ostensible object in calling this council was to suppress heresy, but contemporary writers have given it as their opinion, that his motive was to raise money.*

The Pope opened the council in the church of St. John de Lateran, March 5th, 1179, attended with above three hundred Bishops, a great number of Abbots and inferior Clergy, the whole college of Cardinals, the Nobles and Magistrates of Rome, and the Ambassadors of all the Princes of the western church. Thirty-three canons were published by and received the sanction of this council, but as they have no particular reference to the church of England, we shall only give a few extracts to shew their spirit and tendency. By these the secular power is forbid to judge the persons of the Clergy under the penalty of excommunication ;—to impose any taxes on their estates, or take any thing from them, but when the laity are incapable of supporting the public burdens, then the Clergy might voluntarily offer their assistance. Another canon calls upon the civil power to extirpate all heretics ;—forbids Princes to entertain them in their own houses,

* Hoveden, p. 332, col. 2.

or permit them to live in their dominions, but to confiscate their goods and make them slaves. It grants the same indulgences to those who take up arms against heretics, as were granted to those who engaged against infidels. The incongruity of these canons must be apparent at first sight. They state that the civil powers have no authority over their Clergy, and yet appoints them judges on the most difficult and disputed points of doctrine, and then to exercise a power they had forbidden them to assume in punishing such as they pronounced heretical.

About this time the monks of Malmsbury elected a new Abbot in contempt of their diocesan the Bishop of Salisbury, and in a clandestine manner got a benediction for the Abbot from the Bishop of Landaff. The Bishop complained of this encroachment to the Archbishop, who still smarting under the effects of the Pope's conduct in the case of the Prior of Canterbury; he wrote to Pope Alexander in a style that did credit both to his character and office. He tells the Pope, "that obedience, which is the cement of society, is grown an unfashionable restraint; and that the Abbots relaxing the discipline of the cloister, give pleasure and fancy their utmost range. As for the monks, they spend their time in idleness;

“without any precedent or authority to keep
“them in order, and if your Holiness does
“not step in with a reasonable relief, it is
“to be feared, that, as the Abbots have re-
“volted from their Bishops, the Bishops
“may practice upon the example, and the
“Deans and Archdeacons may take the
“same liberty with the Bishops. I humbly
“conceive, that those who are in the su-
“preme post of authority should consider
“these things, and take care that injury
“and encroachment should not flow in from
“the fountain of power and law, from
“whence justice and equity is expected. If
“a man may speak his thoughts, these
“*strains* of authority are by no means ser-
“viceable to the Bishops of Rome; and if
“that latitude is taken in the church, which
“would not pass without censure in the
“state, must it not be a blemish upon the
“spiritual administration? But the ex-
“emptions were so far from answering the
“pretended end, that they exposed the re-
“ligious to greater trouble and expense,
“than if they were subject to the regular
“course of government, so that the wiser
“and better houses, if they had exemptions,
“they threw them up; that they were only
“the proud and vicious part of the religious
“who contended for these exemptions; such

“ as the Abbot of Malmesbury, who declared,
“ that for the yearly payment of one ounce
“ of gold, they might purchase their free-
“ dom at the court of Rome.”* This power-
ful remonstrance from the Archbishop to the
apostolic see, produced no more effect than
pouring supplications into the graves of the
dead.

This pious and judicious Prelate, in a let-
ter addressed to the Bishops of Winchester,
Ely, and Norwich, deeply laments that the
Clergy were exempted from the civil power,
as it proved greatly to their disadvantage.—
He says, “ if a Jew, or the meanest among
“ the laity, were murdered, the offender
“ would be put to death; but if a Priest or
“ Clergyman of whatever rank is murdered,
“ excommunication is all the punishment;
“ so that the stealing a sheep or a goat is
“ more severely punished than the murder
“ of a Priest. But this (says he) and what
“ is still more insupportable, is nothing but
“ what we have deserved by our ambitiously
“ usurping an authority which did not be-
“ long to us; for by that accursed jurisdic-
“ tion, which we have so presumptuously
“ assumed, we have provoked God and the
“ King, and opened a way for the laity to
“ pour out their malice upon the Clergy.—

* Warner's Eccles. Hist. vol. I. cent. XII. p. 392.

"Thus a very learned and worthy Priest
"was lately murdered at Winchester, by a
"man and his wife who do not deny the
"fact; but the murderer is going away to
"Rome, and makes no doubt, but by pros-
"tituting his wife who is a handsome wo-
"man, that he shall not only obtain the ab-
"solution of that court, but be well paid for
"his journey thither."*

So completely infatuated were the Clergy
in those times in favour of the see of Rome,
that they could not trust their liberties with
any other court; and yet the apostolic
chamber had in one of their councils, made
a canon "that whosoever should lay violent
"hands upon a Clergyman should be ex-
"communicated, and not absolved but by
"the Bishop of Rome himself, or in his
"presence."

The consequence was, that the lives of the
Clergy were less protected than any other
part of the community; for if a man had a
quarrel with a Clergyman, he might lay vio-
lent hands on him, and then repair to
Rome where money never failed to procure
an absolution.

The fame of St. Thomas Becket for work-
ing miracles, had so increased that he was
now more celebrated than any other Saint of

* Warner's Eccles. Hist. vol. I. cent. XII. p. 392.

which that Church could boast. This brought crowds of all ranks, and from different countries, to pay their devotions at his tomb, and obtain cures for themselves or friends. Among other distinguished characters, came the King of France, the old friend and patron of Becket, who being anxious about the life of his only son Philip, who had fallen into a dangerous sickness, resolved to apply to him for help, and came into England for that purpose, attended by the Earl of Flanders and a numerous retinue, who landed at Dover, August 22nd, A. D. 1179; where they were graciously received by King Henry, who conducted them to the tomb of Becket, where he performed his devotions, and presented a chalice of gold, with a grant of one hundred casks of wine annually, to the monks of the cathedral.* On the return of the French King to the Continent, he received the pleasing intelligence that his son was recovered, which was universally ascribed to the prayers and merits of St. Thomas, and tended greatly to enhance the fame of the saint. This year A. D. 1181, died Pope Alexander III. after filling the papal chair twenty-two years.—He succeeded in raising the papal court, far above what it had ever attained under the

* Hoveden. Amal., p. 338. J. Bromt. col. 1140.

pontifical reign of any of his predecessors. He was succeeded by Lucius III. who had no sooner ascended the throne than he formed his plan to reduce the power of the senate and people of Rome. To assist him in the execution of his design, he applied to the King and Clergy of England, and in their usual cant, so artfully represented the danger of St. Peter, that the King and some of the Clergy resolved to raise money for his service. This was a new and unprecedented application, and some of the Bishops well knowing the spirit and corruptions of the court they had to do with, entreated the King to send the money as a present to the Pope in his own and their name, for which they would be answerable; but by no means to admit the legate to come into England to receive it, "lest this example should be drawn into custom to the prejudice of the kingdom."* But this wholesome advice came too late, the legate came and received the money, which gave rise to the worst, and most galling oppression that the English Clergy ever knew. But as it was the fruit of their own doings, the whole order fell an unpitied sacrifice to the rapine and oppressions of the Ecclesiastical monarchy.

* Warner. vol. I. p 396

This year A. D. 1183, another unnatural war broke out between King Henry and his sons. The Pope was applied to, and by his mandate, a council was held at Caen in Normandy, at which Richard Archbishop of Canterbury, Waleran Bishop of Rochester, and several Norman Bishops and Abbots were present; when sentence of excommunication was denounced against all who should disturb the peace of Henry II, except the young King. At the close of the council the Archbishop addressed a letter to the young King, in which he expostulated with him on the impropriety of his conduct, and earnestly entreated him to return to his duty, by assuring him, that if he did not do this within fifteen days, he would excommunicate both him and all his adherents.†

These were some of the last transactions in the life of Richard, Archbishop of Canterbury, who died February 16th, A. D. 1184, after filling that high station above ten years, with satisfaction to the King, honour to himself, and more advantage to the nation than might have been expected from one who was elected to that chair, by a party which possessed much of the spirit of his predecessor Becket. Richard appears to have been a man of a mild temper, inoffensive

† Epistol. P. Blesens, Ep. 47.

life, and of moderate principles. He condemned the unreasonable immunities of the Clergy, for which his predecessor contended with so much violence, as equally injurious both to the church and state.* This made him unpopular with the monks, who represent him as too inactive and timid; and that he connived at the usurpations of the crown upon the church with too much indifference. Had this Prelate been as passive under the usurpations of the court of Rome, as they represent him towards the King's measures, not a monk would have opened his mouth against Archbishop Richard.

If death put a period to the troubles of this Prelate, that event produced a very different effect on King Henry. The King had found the advantage of having a Primate of his spirit and principles, and felt anxious to fill the see with one that was like minded. The King called a council that met at Reading to elect a Primate, when a dispute arose between the Bishops, and the Proctors for the monks of Canterbury, about the right of suffrage in the election, which prevented any choice being then made. Another council was called for the same purpose, which met in London, at which the monks claimed to themselves the sole right of electing a Pri-

* Epistol. P. Blesens, Ep. 73, p. 109.

mate in virtue of a particular charter from the King. Henry was now sensible that he could not be safe, without possessing the power he had so imprudently vested in the hands of a body of men, who were least deserving his confidence. The King had fixed his mind on Baldwin Bishop of Worcester, whom the Bishops of the province elected Primate, which election was confirmed by the King. But the imperious monks pronounced the election void, denied the right of the Bishops to elect, and held the King at defiance with his own charter. The King, aware what effect an open rupture with the monks might have on his affairs at the present crisis, went down to Canterbury, and there forgetting the dignity of his character as King, he meanly crouched to entreat a parcel of proud monks, not to distress him by their opposition ; when all that his condescension could obtain of them was, that they would take no notice of the past election, but at another council they would choose Baldwin for their Archbishop. To meet the captious views of these unreasonable men, the King convened a third council which met at Westminster, when the Prior and monks elected Baldwin, the Bishops chose him a second time, and a second time the King gave his consent. The above fact

shews how power may be abused, when invested in the hands of those who have not the ability to use it.

Baldwin was aware that the tenacious pertinacity of the monks, might on a similar occasion, involve the nation in civil discord ; to prevent which, he formed the design of building a college for secular canons at Hackington, about a mile from Canterbury. The more effectually to cover what he wished to conceal, he purposed pulling down the old church dedicated to St. Stephen, and to erect a new one which, together with the college, were to be dedicated to St. Stephen and St. Thomas Becket, whose fame like a blazing star was attracting the attention of all Christendom. The King approved of the plan, and the Pope granted him a bull authorizing him to receive a fourth part of all the oblations at the tomb of Thomas Becket, to assist him in building the church. On this the work was immediately begun and carried on with spirit. The monks not only grudged that share of the oblations granted by the Pope, but began to suspect that the Archbishop intended to remove the seat of his see, and the precious remains of their favourite saint to his new church and convent. Excited by these suspicions, they filled the nation with such clamourous outcries against

the person and undertaking of the Primate, as though the very existence of Christianity depended upon the power and wealth of the monks of Canterbury. They complained to the King, but they got no redress. The court of Rome was their sure refuge, and to the Pope they made their appeal, and notified the same to the Archbishop, December 20th, A. D. 1186, hoping that he would have desisted from his works. But Baldwin was not a man of that timid nature, for he suspended the Prior and monks who had notified the appeal. The King made several attempts to prevail on the monks to refer their dispute with the Primate, to him and the Bishops of the Province; but these attempts were fruitless, and they at length obtained a bull from the same Pope Urban III, commanding the Archbishop to restore the Prior and monks, and to stop his works. To this bull, which was dated March 25th, A. D. 1187, Baldwin paid no regard, but prosecuted the work with still greater vigor than ever, being anxious to have the buildings finished. The Archbishop was supported in the contest by all the power of the crown. The Pope was enraged at the Archbishop for proceeding with his buildings, and issued another bull against him, and sent three legates to serve him with the monition,

but when they attempted to execute the instrument from Rome, the Primate served them with an inhibition; and the Lord Chief Justice Ralph de Glanvill, issued a writ commanding the Prior and monks to appear before him at the King's bench.—Encouraged by the chief justice, the Primate seized all the possessions of the Prior and monks, who sent a deputation to the King in Normandy to complain of this act of violence; and also made another statement of their grievances to the Pope. His Holiness was greatly enraged at the contempt shewn to his mandate by the Archbishop, and dispatched another bull to him, dated October 12th, 1187, commanding him to demolish all his buildings at Hackington, to desecrate the ground on which they had been erected, and restore all their possessions to the monks. At the same time, he sent a most insolent letter to the King, commanding him to compel the Primate to submit to the above bull.

The monkish historians say, that when these letters were delivered to the King and Primate, their countenances fell, and they began to treat the monks with kindness; but if that was the case, their dejection was not of long duration, for in a few days after the news arrived that Pope Urban III. was dead, and that Cardinal Albert, a particular friend

of the Archbishop's, was chosen Pope, and had assumed the name of Gregory III.—This event gave great encouragement to the Primate, who resolving to bring the refractory monks to submission, he shut them up prisoners in their convent, excommunicated the Sub-prior, and some others. Whilst in their confinement, the King and the Primate sent several agents to prevail upon them to withdraw their appeals, and give their consent to the new erection at Hackington; but their unbending obstinacy was proof against both threats and promises. The monks had gained the citizens of Canterbury to their interest by representing the conduct of the Primate as calculated to ruin the interest of the church and city, by removing as they said he intended, the tomb of St. Thomas,* so that the people pitied the monks and furnished them with every thing, as if they alone were called to suffer martyr-

* We may form some idea of the estimation in which Becket's tomb was held, from what is said by one of the best historians of that age. "In this year (1171), about Easter, (says Matthew Paris,) it pleased the Lord Jesus Christ to irradiate his glorious martyr Thomas Becket, with many miracles, that it might appear to all the world he had obtained a victory suitable to his merits. None who approached his sepulchre in faith returned without a cure. For strength was restored to the lame, hearing to the deaf, sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, health to lepers, and life to the dead. Nay, not only men and women, but even birds and beasts, were raised from death to life."—*M. Paris*, p. 87.

dom for the interest of christianity. Things continued in this state about two months, when the sudden death of Gregory III, produced another change at the court of Rome by the election of Clement III, who was as great a friend to the monks, as Gregory had been to the Primate. Never were the baneful effects of foreign influence on the subjects of another state, more gallingly felt than on this occasion. The two heads of the nation, the King and the Primate, were menaced by the Pope as though they held their offices at his will and pleasure. On the 26th of February, A. D. 1188, he issued a bull commanding Baldwin to demolish all his works at Hackington, and repair all the damages he had done to the monks at Canterbury.—As this bull was disregarded by Baldwin, another was issued, dated March 16th, commanding the Abbot of Feversham to excommunicate all persons who had any of the goods or estates of the convent in their possession. The Abbot executed his commission, but the excommunicated were so powerfully supported by the King and the Primate, that they treated that highest censure with contempt.

Honorius, the Prior of Canterbury who had long resided at the papal court to prosecute his appeals, prevailed on Pope Cle-

ment to appoint the Bishop of Ostia his legate *a latere*, and send him into England to see his bulls executed in their full extent; but when the legate and Prior were preparing for their journey, they were both seized with and died of the plague, which at that time raged with great violence at Rome. A second legate was appointed, who died on his journey at Pavia, in December, A. D. 1188.*

These events were by the superstitions of those times, considered as miraculous interpositions of heaven in favour of the Archbishop's cause. But notwithstanding that Baldwin was encouraged by the King, the Bishops, and all the secular Clergy, yet after maintaining a manly struggle against the pertinacity of the monks, and the usurpations of the Pope, for nearly four years, he was at length obliged to demolish all the buildings he had erected at Hackington; as much to the indignity of the King, and Clergy of England, as to the honour and satisfaction of the monks of Canterbury. That the good Primate might not loose all the fruits of his labour, he bought the manor of Lambeth, of the church of Rochester, and with the materials which he removed from Hackington, he built a palace which has

* Henry's Hist. vol. 5, Art. Relig. B. 3, C. 2, sect. 3.

been occupied ever since by his successors in the Primacy.

Henry II. had not only the mortification of seeing the monks of Canterbury triumph over his Kingly authority; but his most painful trial, was from the undutiful conduct of his own sons, for whose sakes he had stooped to so many papal usurpations, which proved injurious to himself, his crown, and his subjects. After the death of his eldest son Henry, Richard became the heir apparent to his father's dominions; and through his father not complying with what he thought proper to demand, he went and joined the King of France in a war against his father, whose dominions they entered with fire and sword. Henry prepared for meeting his enemies in the field, but that success which had crowned his arms on former occasions, now forsook him, and he was driven from place to place before his rebellious son Richard. In this reverse of circumstances, his favourite son John, abandoned his father's cause and joined his brother. This appears to have given the mortal wound to Henry's affectionate heart, and brought on a fever of which he died at Chimon, July 6th, A.D. 1189, in the thirty-fifth year of his reign, and the fifty-seventh of his age.*

* Benedict, Abbas, p. 549. W. Neubrigen, l. 3, c. 25.

It will be very difficult to draw a just character of this Prince, from the strange mixture of vices and virtues which his different circumstances rendered conspicuous.—He was certainly the most accomplished Prince that had filled the British throne since the Norman conquest. In his deportment he was exceeding polite, except to persons of a haughty spirit, whom he delighted to humble. His heart was warm, and his passions strong, which rendered him an ardent lover, but not a faithful husband,—a zealous friend, but a formidable enemy,—a kind master, and a too indulgent parent. He avoided war from principles of prudence and humanity; but when it became necessary, he manifested so much courage and activity, that he baffled all the schemes of his enemies. His understanding which was naturally good, was improved by an excellent education, and his frequent converse with the wisest men; so that he became the greatest politician of the age in which he lived.—These qualifications, will admit of no apology that can be made, for his cruel conduct towards the few pious inoffensive Germans,* who fled into England to avoid the persecution of their own country, for not subscribing to some of the absurd dogmas of po-

* See vol. II. p. 7, 8.

pery. The sentence he pronounced upon them, has left a stain upon his character that can never be wiped off. There is another part of his conduct equally reprehensible. By his tame submission to the court of Rome, he suffered the Pope to pluck the brightest ornament from the English crown, by transferring the allegiance of the Clergy to a foreign power, a degradation which had to be submitted to by all his successors to the eighth of his name.

CHAPTER XV.

Accession of Richard I.—Council at Pipewell in Northamptonshire.—Disputes between Baldwin and the monks of Canterbury.—Longchamp appointed Chief Justiciary, and Papal Legate.—He held two councils, and by his imprudence involved the nation in trouble.—Death of Baldwin Archbishop of Canterbury.—Imperious conduct of the monks about electing a Primate.—Longchamp imprisons Geoffrey Archbishop of York, in Dover Castle.—Several debates with the monks about electing a Primate.—The King leaves Palestine, is shipwrecked and cast into prison by the Duke of Austria.—Hubert Fitz. Walter elected Primate.—Return of the King.—Conduct of the Pope noticed.—The legate held a council at York.—Disputes between the monks and Archbishop about the works at Lambeth.—The Pope encourages the monks.—Both appeal to the Pope.—The Pope's insolent letter to the King.—A heavy tax is imposed by the Pope on the English in support of a croisade.—Death of King Richard.

Richard, the eldest surviving son of Henry II. was in Normandy with his father at the time of his death. As soon as he had observed the obsequies of his father, which he did with marks of contrition for his former conduct, he came into England, and was crowned at Westminster by the Archbishop of Canterbury, September 3rd, A.D. 1189. Richard took the usual oath at his corona-

tion, to protect the church in her estates, and continue the privileges of the Clergy. The Archbishop reminded him, that but few Kings made it a matter of conscience to keep this oath; he must therefore conjure him in the name of God, to observe the engagements he had entered into, on taking upon himself the royal authority: to which Richard replied, "by God's assistance, he would punctually perform them all."

The late King had made great preparations for another expedition to the Holy Land, and happy had it been for England, had that design died with him; but unfortunately, Richard had taken the cross before his father's death, and scarcely was the ceremony of his coronation over, before he began to push his preparations with all the vigour natural to a courageous young Prince.

The King did not entirely neglect the affairs of the church, but some things which required much calm consideration, were hurried on with a precipitancy, the effects of which were afterwards severely felt. He convened a council of the Prelates and Clergy which met at the abbey of Pipewell in Northamptonshire, in which he filled up all the vacant sees and abbeys. He nominated Geoffrey, his natural brother, to the see of York, on which, Baldwin Archbishop

VOL. II. L

of Canterbury stood up in the council and claimed the sole right of consecrating the elect of York ; and in support of his claim produced a charter of William the Conqueror. On the other hand, Geoffrey insisted on the rights and privileges of his see, and having first received the orders of his priesthood from the Bishop of Candida Casa, in Scotland, he went to Rome to receive his pall and consecration ; against which Baldwin appealed to the Pope.* He also appointed Geoffrey de Lucy to the see of Winchester, Richard, Archdeacon of Ely to Lincoln, William Longchamp, his Chancellor to Ely, and Hubert Fitz-Walter, Dean of York to Salisbury.

Not long after this council broke up the old dispute about building a convent at Hackington, broke out again between the Primate and the monks at Canterbury. Inconsiderate as this dispute at first sight may appear, it is a branch of that important controversy between the court of Rome, and the crown and church of England. The King sent a letter to the convent, commanding them not to appeal to the court of Rome to settle the controversy, as he would not suffer a Papal legate to come and disturb the peace of his kingdom ; but that they

* Hoveden Annal, p. 376.

should submit to the judgment of the Bishops and Abbots, and that the Primate should have the charges of making the reference.

The haughty monks instead of acknowledging the King's kindness, and submitting to his authority, sent a messenger to the Pope's legate in Normandy, desiring him to come into England without delay, stating, that if they were forced to comply with the King's terms, the interest of their convent would be utterly ruined. The Cardinal legate knew how valuable the services of that convent were to his court, and immediately set out for England without obtaining leave from the King; not willing it should be lost for want of his services. But on his landing at Dover he was forbid to proceed, nor was he acknowledged as legate until the dispute was compromised between the monks and the Primate; which, after much debate was signed by the King, Queen, and a number of Bishops and Abbots. This treaty was greatly in favour of the monks, for by it the Prior of Christ's church was to be turned out, who had been appointed by the Archbishop.

King Richard having engaged to accompany the King of France on his expedition to Palestine, great numbers of all ranks ranged themselves under his standard, to

share the glories of that visionary enterprize. The Archbishop went through his province to preach up the crusade ; whose example was followed by many others of the Clergy, and it was lamentable to see the effects produced on a warlike people, in an ignorant and superstitious age. Parents abandoned their children ; husbands left their wives ; monks renounced their vows, and many of the different orders of the Clergy, gave up the cure of souls to wield carnal weapons. Both men and women of all ages went to seek their graves in the East, and impoverished their own country to defray the expences of the funeral.

The King was very jealous of the aspiring spirit of his brother John ; and to prevent him making an attempt to seize the crown during his absence, he compelled both his brothers, Geoffrey and John, to take an oath not to visit England for three years without his leave. He appointed a commission of six Lords to manage the affairs of the state in his absence, of whom William Longchamp, Bishop of Ely, and Lord Chancellor was the first, and to increase his authority, at the King's desire he was made legate from the see of Rome.

After the departure of Richard on his expedition into the Holy Land, William Long-

champ, who at once held the offices of Bishop of Ely, Chief Justiciary, Chancellor, and Papal legate, reigned in England with more than legal power, and lived in more than royal pomp. By virtue of his legantine commission, he held two councils this year A. D. 1190, one at Gloucester, and the other at Westminster; but these were more for an ostentatious display of his own greatness, than the dispatch of important business. Before the King arrived at Palestine, he had the mortification to hear, that the imperious manner in which Longchamp was executing his commission, had thrown the affairs of England into the greatest confusion, bordering upon a civil war.

Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, accompanied the English army into Palestine; and after enduring the greatest hardships in his voyage, he joined the Christian army at the siege of Ptolemais, where he died November 20th, A. D. 1191.* The report of his death reached England the March following, when the dispute between the monks of Canterbury and the Bishops of the province, about the right of electing a Primate was again revived, in all that rancour of spirit which marked their former proceedings. To prevent the monks from

* Gervas Chron. col. 1566:

making an immediate election ; the Bishop of London accompanied by an officer of the exchequer, went in haste to Canterbury, and commanded them to take no steps towards supplying the vacancy in the Archbishopal chair, without the consent of the King and Bishops of the province ; but the monks protested against this as an encroachment on their right of election.*

On the 25th May, A. D. 1192, W. Longchamp Chief Justicary and Papal legate, presented a letter from the King to the convent at Canterbury, recommending William Archbishop of Mountreale, in Sicily, and directing them to receive him as their Archbishop. To the King's demand, the monks gave the following evasive answer, in a great council held at Northampton in June,—
“ That they were not satisfied about the death
“ of Archbishop Baldwin, who they hoped
“ was still alive ; and therefore they craved
“ a delay, till that fact was ascertained.”
In the mean time, the monks excluded from their community, all whom they suspected of disaffection, particularly their prior Osbern, and raised Geoffrey, the sub-prior into his place.

Another violent commotion was excited by the imprisonment of Geoffrey Archbishop

* Gervas Chron. col. 1567.

of York, in the castle of Dover, by order of William Longchamp, which prevented all further proceedings in the affair of Canterbury, till after tranquillity was restored by the flight of Longchamp out of the kingdom. On this event Prince John, and Walter, Archbishop of Rouen, on whom the chief direction of affairs then devolved, held a council at London in October, when the monks of Canterbury were required to give their consent to the election of the Archbishop of Mountreale; to which they returned this artful answer;—"That they could not in conscience give their consent to the election of the person proposed, until they were better acquainted with his character; and until they had asked council of the Lord, and felt the divine direction upon their own minds." This answer was very grateful to the Archbishop of Rouen, who had already fixed a longing eye on the primacy of England; he granted them a month's delay, and piously exhorted the monks to pray heartily during that time for the direction of heaven.*

Another council was accordingly held, which met at Canterbury, November 12th, for the election of an Archbishop. Several Bishops had arrived, and others were on

* Gervas col. 1578, vide Henry vol. 5. p. 426.

their way, but the monks had formed their plan before the council met, and without either consulting those Bishops who were come, or waiting the arrival of the others; Geoffrey their prior stood up in the council and declared in the name of the convent, that they chose, in the name of the Holy Trinity, Reginald Bishop of Bath to be their Archbishop, and at the same time took that Bishop by the hand, conducted him into the cathedral, and placed him on the Archiepiscopal throne. To this election the Bishops of the province yielded, rather than risk the peace of the nation, which was already in a high state of agitation. The new Prelate did not long enjoy the honours of his election, for he fell sick soon after, and died December 26th, A. D. 1192.

In the beginning of the year A. D. 1193, the news of King Richard's captivity* reached England, which threw the whole

* He embarked for England on board a ship in the port of Acon, October 9th; and after being tossed at sea for several weeks he was shipwrecked near Aquileia; and attempting to pass through Germany in disguise, he was discovered in a village near Vienna, December 20th, and thrown into prison by Leopold, Duke of Austria, regardless of either his rank, or the cause in which he had been engaged. As soon as the Emperor Henry VI. heard that King Richard was a prisoner, (to whom he was an avowed enemy,) he sent and claimed the royal captive, promising to pay Leopold sixty thousand pounds out of the expected ransom.—M. Paris, p. 121. In this ignominious manner was this illustrious Prince, and great champion of Christianity, bought and sold by those who could invent a pretence, for offering him any violence.

kingdom into so much confusion, that for some time no steps were taken to supply the vacancy in the see of Canterbury. The King knew that a zealous friend in that important station might contribute not a little to raise his ransom and procure his liberty. He wrote from his prison to his mother Queen Eleanor and his ministers, earnestly entreating them to procure the advancement of Hubert Fitz-Walter Bishop of Salisbury, (who had been with him in the Holy Land,) to the Primacy.

The general sympathy excited in all classes of subjects towards their cruelly persecuted King, proved a favourable circumstance for his ministers, to accomplish the desire of their sovereign in procuring the election of Hubert to the archiepiscopacy, for he was unanimously elected by the monks of Canterbury, May 29th, A. D. 1193, and the day following, when the Queen and provincial Bishops were assembled, in pursuance of the King's instructions, the Proctors of the convent presented Hubert, their Archbishop, to receive the royal assent. Though the dangerous consequences of such a president was easy to foresee, yet the King being still a prisoner, and the kingdom in a very disordered state, the regency thought it adviseable to pass over this insolence for

the present, in hopes of a more favourable time to cure it.

A part of Richard's ransom being paid, and hostages given for the rest, he obtained his liberty, and on his return was received with every demonstration of joy, and all the pomp and ceremony usual on such occasions. Scarcely had Richard time to compose the disorders in England before he was involved in a war with France, the expences of which, from the impoverished state of the nation, he was ill prepared to meet. Whilst his affairs were in this unhappy state, and the nation was groaning under the insupportable burdens of poverty and depopulation, occasioned by the late expedition to the Holy Land, the Pope sent letters to the Archbishop, Bishops, and Abbots to use all their zeal to excite the people to take the cross, and persuade the King to send another body of troops into Palestine. The conduct of the Pope on this occasion, shews the policy of that court in a clear light. He well knew that the more he could weaken the nation by drawing away both her men and money, the easier it would be for him to exercise that absolute power over both the temporal and spiritual affairs of the nation, to which he had long been aspiring.

Geoffrey, Archbishop of York, and brother to the King, having, during the absence of Richard, entered into measures with his brother John and the King of France, against the King; on his return Richard immediately seized the temporalities of the Bishopric. The King having obtained a legantine commission from the Pope for the Archbishop of Canterbury, he held a council at York, in which he made several canons, and established his own authority, which was the chief object of his journey, though it was professedly to enquire into a charge exhibited against Archbishop Geoffrey, by the Dean and Chapter of York. It appears that none of the Bishops of the province attended this council, but it consisted of the Dean and Precentor, the Archdeacons, Chancellor, and canons of the church, the Abbots, Priors, rural-Deans, and the lower Clergy; a council for which the ancient church had no name, and seems to owe its existence to the King's displeasure against his brother, the Archbishop of York.

On what grounds Hubert dismissed the charge against Geoffrey, it is impossible now to say, as the contemporary historians are silent on the subject, but the following year Pope Celestine himself suspended him, and by a bull proclaimed his sentence to the pro-

vince of York. The Pope's pretence for this severe censure was, that he neglected the duties of his sacred office, and spent his time in hunting and hawking ; but probably, the real reason was, that he was an enemy to those vexatious appeals to Rome, and exerted himself to prevent them.*

Both the King and the Bishops of the province of Canterbury, had long felt the bad effects of the monks of that cathedral, claiming the exclusive right of electing the Archbishops. To lessen that influence, the late Archbishop attempted to establish a society of secular canons at Hackington near Canterbury, but in his attempt was shamefully frustrated. His successor, Archbishop Hubert, formed the design of establishing a similar society at Lambeth, hoping that the distance from Canterbury would prevent any opposition. But the jealous monks, animated by the spirit of their beloved Becket, and anxious to preserve a succession of men, who like him, would oppose the civil power, they took the alarm, and commenced a most violent opposition. Both the King and the Archbishop took all possible pains to accommodate matters to the satisfaction of the convent. They proposed, that every canon of Lambeth, before his admission into office,

* Hoveden, *Annal.* p. 433.

should take an oath at the high altar of the cathedral at Canterbury, that he would neither by himself, nor by any one from him, claim a vote in the election of an Archbishop,—that he would never consent to the removing of the see of Canterbury, or the reliques of St. Thomas from that city; or any thing to the prejudice of the ancient rights of the church of Canterbury. The Primate further proposed, that to preserve a friendship between the two societies, the Prior of Canterbury should always be a canon of the church of Lambeth, and be privy to all ~~the~~ business transacted by that body. He ~~further~~ engaged to obtain the consent both of the King and Pope to this agreement, and that he and all his successors should swear to observe it. But nothing would satisfy the insatiable monks, who privately sent a deputation to Rome, where they were most graciously received by Pope Innocent III, who soon returned them with a bull dated April 25th, A.D. 1197, directed to the Archbishop of Canterbury, commanding him in the most imperious strain, to dispossess the canons, and demolish the college he had erected at Lambeth, within thirty days, or he would suspend him from his office: “For (says this Pontiff in his “bull,) it is not fit that any man should

VOL. II. M

“ have any authority, who doth not revere
“ and obey the apostolic see.”*

This bull greatly shocked both the King and the Archbishop, who devised every means they could invent to prevent its execution. The King wrote himself to the Prior and convent, and charges them with “concealing the truth, and by false accusations, obtained from the court of Rome, an order for demolishing the church at Lambeth.” He told them further, that by the “laws of England, the King or the Bishops might build churches in their own lands and endow them.—That without acquainting the King, and contrary to law, and the dignity of the realm, they had endeavoured to destroy this church built by the Archbishop.—That the demolishing the church at Hackington was agreed to, on condition, that the society should be removed to Lambeth,—and as this agreement was made by us, with the concurrence of the Bishops and Barons, and sealed with our seals, so it was confirmed by the Pope; an agreement, which to the prejudice of our crown and dignity, you have presumptuously attempted to destroy, which we cannot, we will not suffer to pass unpunished.” In conclusion, he demanded of them as they valued his favour, their own

* Gervas Chron. col. 1602, &c.

liberties and possessions, to abstain from executing that bull, which they had surreptitiously procured from the court of Rome. The King took the house at Lambeth under his own immediate protection, and commanded all his officers not to suffer the Archbishop, nor any other person to injure that collegiate church. He also wrote to all the Bishops of England to the same effect. But none of these things moved the monks, who knew that they had nothing to fear from the wrath of a King, whilst under the protection of the Roman Pontiff. On the monks refusing to comply with any of the proposed terms, the King commanded the high sheriff of Kent to seize all the temporalities of the convent.

Thus far the King acted with a spirit and firmness which became the Monarch of England, against the encroachments of the court of Rome, and the seditious conduct of a few contemptible monks; and had he made a stand here, in all probability he would have carried his point. But by his imprudent appeal to the Pope, he tacitly acknowledged that authority which he had been labouring to overthrow.

Pope Innocent III, had all the ambition of Gregory VII, and all the furious zeal of Alexander III, but had a more artful ad-

dress than either of them, and being aware how the interests of the Holy see were connected with the disputed point, he armed the monks *cap-a-pie* with the impenetrable armour of St. Peter. As the King had betrayed his cause by making an appeal to the Pope, Innocent determined to let the world see that he had ascended that throne of imperial power, for which his predecessors had so long and violently contended. He first confirmed his former sentence against the Archbishop, and announced it by a bull dated November 20th, A.D. 1197, threatening him with the highest censures of the church, if he did not immediately demolish the buildings at Lambeth. At the same time he directed another bull to the King, commanding him in the most imperious manner to see the sentence of the apostolic see executed. He tells the King, "that those who attempted any thing in opposition to the apostolic see, should learn by their punishment, how hard it is to kick against the pricks." The Pope sent another bull to the King, written, if possible, in a still more insolent strain, commanding him immediately to restore the monks of Canterbury to all their former possessions: "that he would not suffer the least contempt to be offered to himself, for he held the

"place of God upon earth ; and without respect of persons, he would punish the men and the nations, that presumed to disobey his commands."*

We cannot but stand and look with astonishment, at the intolerable height of arrogance and impiety, to which this professed successor of St. Peter had ascended ! When these bulls were delivered to the King and the Archbishop, the idea of being exposed to the thunders of the church, produced such an electrifying effect, that they were unnerved for any further opposition, and determined to obey. Thus, after all the manly opposition made by this warlike Prince against papal usurpations, he had the mortification to see the buildings at Lambeth demolished, February A. D. 1199, and his sovereign authority trampled upon by his own subjects, under the influence of the tyrannical power of the Pope of Rome.

The conduct of the Pope on this occasion, amazed the whole nation. But this calamity came not alone, for the King was this year called to attend to his affairs on the Continent, and approaching too near the walls of the castle of Chalus, in Aquitaine, which he was then besieging, he was wounded in the shoulder by an arrow from a cross-bow,

* Gervas, Chron. col. 1616—1624.

which was discharged at him by one Bertrame de Gourdon. In drawing the arrow from the King's shoulder, the iron remained behind, to extract which, the unskilful surgeon made several deep and unnecessary incisions, which in a few days became gangrenous and proved mortal. On his death-bed he bequeathed the whole of his dominions and three-fourths of his treasure to his brother John, and the other fourth to his domestics and the poor.* He expressed great regret for the vices he had indulged in, and patiently submitted to undergo a severe discipline from the hands of the Clergy who attended him in his last moments. He died April 6th, A. D. 1199, in the forty-second year of his age, and the tenth of his reign.† He ordered his body to be interred at the feet of his late father, expressive of the contrition he felt, at having caused his father so much sorrow.

Thus closed the reign of Richard I. In his person he was tall, strong, and handsome, and his air stately and majestic.—The natural endowments of his mind were not inferior to the perfections of his body. His understanding was strong, his memory retentive, his imagination lively, and his courage so undaunted, that it procured him

* Hoveden, p. 450. † Brompt. col. 1279.

the surname of *Cœur de Lion*, or *Lion-hearted*. In his conversation he was pleasant and facetious ; and his pleasantry did not forsake him even at the approach of death. When the Archbishop of Rouen told him in his last illness, that it was now high time to part with his three favourite daughters, his pride, avarice, and luxury : he replied, I am resolved to dispose of them in marriage without delay : my pride to the templars, my avarice to the monks, and my luxury to the Prelates, because I know they love them dearly, and will treat them kindly.* Had it fallen to the lot of Richard to live in more favourable times, and under different circumstances, he would have appeared to much better advantage in the pages of British history ; but we must admit, that his vices as a man, greatly diminish his lustre as a Prince.

* Prompt. col. 1279.

CHAPTER XVI.

Accession of King John.—Disputes about electing a Bishop for St. David's.—The Pope imposes a heavy tax upon the nation.—The Archbishop of York opposes the collecting a King's tax.—A contest between the King and the monks of St. Austin, about electing the rector of Feversham.—The Pope's conduct on the occasion.—Extraordinary mission of the Abbot of Flay.—Death of Archbishop Hubert.—The clandestine election of Reginald by the junior monks.—The Bishop of Norwich elected by the senior monks.—The Pope is appealed to, who sets both aside and appoints Langton.—The Pope sends a letter and four Rings to the King, with a ridiculous explanation.—The King expostulates with the Pope.—The Kingdom laid under an interdict.—Chancellor Wells made Bishop of Lincoln.—His perfidious conduct.—Council at Northampton, when the legate pronounced sentence of excommunication on the King.—The Pope excommunicates all his adherents, and offers the Kingdom to the King of France.—John's reconciliation with the church.—The interdict taken off.—The Bishops obtain redress, and the Primate suspended.*

* This article was by mistake inserted in the contents of the last chapter.

John Earl of Mortain, youngest son of Henry II, succeeded his brother Richard I, both in the throne of England and his foreign dominions, to the exclusion of Arthur Duke of Brittany, the only son of Geoffrey,

his elder brother. John being in Normandy at the time of his brother's death, went immediately to Chinon, where his treasures were deposited, and having secured them, he sent Hubert Archbishop of Canterbury, and William Mareschal Earl of Strigul, into England to secure the succession and preserve the peace of that kingdom.* John was solemnly inaugurated Duke of Normandy at Rouen, April 25th, A. D. 1199, by the Archbishop of that place; and on the 27th of May, was crowned at Westminster, by the Archbishop of Canterbury. John had but just got seated on his throne, before he felt the smart from St. Peter's sword. It happened as might be expected, that as Pope Innocent III, had domineered over the lion-hearted Richard, he would not be less insolent to his pusillanimous successor King John.

A vacancy happening in the see of St. David's, gave Innocent an opportunity of convincing John, that though he wore the crown of England, he was only to consider himself as a vassal under the Pope of Rome. The nomination to the see of St. David's, was an unquestionable prerogative of the crown, and Hubert, Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Chancellor, nominated two

* Hoveden, p. 457.

persons to the chapter in the King's name, for them to elect one ; but, in direct opposition to the wishes of the King, they elected Girald Bary, (commonly called Giraldus Cambrensis.) This election was countenanced by the Pope, though he knew that Girald was one of the King's most open and inveterate enemies. Girald was born in Wales, and considering the age in which he lived was very learned, but the high opinion he entertained of his own merit made him so vain and insolent, that he treated every one else with contempt. On being elected by the chapter, though in opposition to the wishes of the King, he hasted to Rome to secure the Pope's confirmation. He also pointed out to the Pope, the advantages that would accrue to the apostolic chamber, by restoring St. David's to the metropolitical power it formerly possessed. That he would not only ensure to his Holiness a penny from all the Welsh, but also a tenth of their cattle and moveable goods. Before the Pope had pronounced his decision on what Girald had proposed, ambassadors arrived at Rome from King John, who was aware, that if the church of Wales was made independent of that of England, the Pope could easily remove the civil dependence also, when that would most promote his own advantage.—

To accomplish his purpose with the Pope, John thought proper to wave his right of nomination, and only desired that one of the Abbots which was first elected by the chapter, might be appointed to the vacant see. This condescension on the part of the King, together with the golden arguments of his ambassadors, outweighed in the mind of the infallible Pontiff, all the finely painted advantages of Girald's scheme. However to make him some recompense for his disappointment, his Holiness very liberally granted him the temporalities of the vacant see, which by the laws and customs of England belonged to the King.

After all the loss of human lives, and vast expence and calamity that the expeditions into the Holy Land had occasioned in all the Kingdoms of Europe, and England in particular, the Pope published a bull dated December 27th, A. D. 1199, directed to all the Prelates and Clergy of the christian church. This bull was not dictated in the usual canting style of *intreating aid* for the holy war; but commanding them by the authority of the apostolic see,—of Almighty God,—and of the Holy Ghost,—and under the penalty of eternal damnation, to pay the fortieth part of all their revenues, for defraying the expence of this expedition, which

was to be commanded by two cardinals to be named by the Pope. This bull contains many directions about the manner of levying this tax upon the Clergy, and of collecting the voluntary contributions of the laity, which are all expressed in the high tone of supreme authority. This was the first attempt made by the Pope, to impose a tax on the Clergy of all nations by his own authority, as sovereign of the church. Our astonishment is equally excited by the audacious conduct of the Pope, and the tame pliancy of the Princes of Europe ; as no Prince can be too jealous of submitting his subjects to be taxed by a foreign power. But the precedent set by Innocent III. in those days of darkness and usurpation, has been acted upon by his predecessors ever since, and is now (1828) in active operation in Ireland on a large scale, as appears from the printed reports of the weekly amount of Roman Catholic rent.

To carry into effect this bull of Innocent, Hubert Archbishop of Canterbury convened a council of the Clergy, which met at Westminster, A. D. 1200, though prohibited by Geoffrey Fitz-Peter, Earl of Essex, and high justiciary of England. We are not surprised at that wise statesman foreseeing the baneful effects which must follow if the

subjects of England were to be taxed by virtue of such a mandate. But in spite of the prohibition, this papal tax was collected in England, and the money was carried to Rome by Philip a notary of that church.—“ But (says a contemporary historian) it will “ never be applied to the purpose for which “ it was raised, unless the Romans have “ changed their nature, and relinquished “ their innate rapacity.”*

It has already been noticed that the Archbishop of York was a man of a very turbulent and ambitious spirit, and in order to render himself popular, he opposed the levying a tax in his diocese, which the states had consented to give the King. This ungenerous act toward his brother, to whom he was under great obligations, furnished the King with a pretence for seizing his temporalities. But the lofty spirit of this Prelate was not to be humbled by such a chastisement. He excommunicated the sheriff and all his officers who collected the tax ; and because the people did not support him, he laid his whole diocese under an interdict ; but when he found that he was left to act alone, he made his submission, and obtained reconciliation with the King.

* Diceto, apud X Script. col. 707. Extr. Henry, vol. 5, p. 433.
VOL. II. N

About this time the rector of Feversham in Kent died, and the King presented Wells, Chancellor of Canterbury, to the living. The monks of St. Austin pretended they had a right to the living, and immediately on the death of the incumbent, sent one of their order to take possession of the church and parsonage, and by force kept out the person presented by the King. The King was enraged at seeing the prerogatives of the crown, trampled under foot by a few audacious monks, and commanded the sheriff of the county to dispossess them; which from their resistance he could not effect without causing some blood to be shed in the church. The Archbishop and several of the nobility interposed in order to compromise matters, but all their efforts were rendered abortive by the obstinacy of these monks, which could only be equalled, by those of Canterbury. They were confident of receiving encouragement from the court of Rome, whose policy it was, to support every thing that would sink the secular authority in the estimation of the people, and establish the power of St. Peter upon its ruins. The monks made their appeal to the Pope, who, without any inquiry into its merits, immediately espoused their cause, and sent a bull to the Bishop of Ely, to ex-

communicate those who had dispossessed the monks, and put the places they inhabited under an interdict, and restore the church at Feversham to the monks. The King forbade the execution of this insolent bull, in which he was joined by the Archbishop; but this gave birth to another bull from the Pope addressed to the King, in which he tells him, "that to his own master every one must stand or fall,"—that the King had no right to interfere in the affairs of the ecclesiastics, as they were not under his cognizance. Such were the arrogant assumptions of Pope Innocent III, at the beginning of the thirteenth century.

About the same time that the Pope imposed a tax on the Clergy for defraying the expense of a crusade, he sent emissaries into England to exhort the laity to take the cross. The most popular of these preachers was one Eustachius, Abbot of Flay in Normandy, who pretended that he had received a letter from heaven written by the hand of God, in which he threatened to rain sticks and stones, and boiling water on all who frequented fairs and markets on Sundays.* These declamations produced very powerful effects. The Sundays' fairs and markets were for some time deserted, and great

* Hoveden, Annal. p. 457.

numbers of all ranks crowded to take the cross, which he warmly recommended. But when the strong excitement, produced by the bold declamations of this enthusiast began to subside, many repented of their rashness, and would gladly have declined embarking in so distant and dangerous an expedition. But they were soon convinced that there was no trifling with the court of Rome. For no sooner did the Pope hear of their disposition to linger, than he sent out a thundering bull, dated May 5th, A. D. 1201, directed to the Archbishops and Bishops of England, commanding them to excommunicate by name, every person who had taken the cross, and refused to fulfil his engagements. This compelled all who had taken the cross, either to go on this crusade, or to purchase a dispensation, which was not easily obtained. It is worthy of remark, that the powerful army raised on this occasion by the Pope, was not employed in rescuing the Holy Land from the hands of infidels, but in dethroning the christian Emperor of Constantinople, in order to subject that Empire to the see of Rome.*

At this time an event happened in England, that engaged the attention of the whole nation, and shook the very pillars of the

* Bzovii. continnat. Baron. Annal. ann. 1202, 1203, 1204.

state Pope Innocent III. had carried the papal usurpations much higher than any of his predecessors. Not content with endeavouring to extend the authority of the Roman Pontiff over all the potentates of Europe, he was ambitious of reducing the ecclesiastics themselves to the same degree of servitude. He pretended that the disposal of all benefices justly belonged to the successors of St. Peter; and that they had a right to employ all the revenues of the church, whenever the interest of the papal see demanded assistance. The conduct of the monks of Canterbury, gave him an opportunity of carrying these pretensions into execution.—These monks, claimed the privilege on the death of a Primate to name a successor; but the consent of the King, and the voice of the suffragan Bishops was usually obtained, to render the election valid. But these were times when the most sacred rites were usurped, and the most unwarrantable means used by ambitious men, to promote their own interest.

On the death of Hubert, Archbishop of Canterbury, July 18th, A. D. 1205, the junior monks assembled on the very night of his decease, and chose Reginald their Sub-prior for his successor; installed him in the archiepiscopal throne before midnight,

and having enjoined him in the strictest secrecy, sent him immediately to Rome, to solicit the confirmation of his election. But the vain Priest no sooner landed in Flanders, than he published the whole secret, which was soon echoed back to the suffragan Bishops of Canterbury, and the elder monks of Christ-church, who were highly exasperated at being so clandestinely deprived of their privileges. This act of the junior monks was also an encroachment on the prerogatives of the King, who urged the ecclesiastics to proceed immediately to a new election, and recommended John de Gray, Bishop of Norwich, as a proper person for that important office. The monks of Christ-church met, and without consulting the Bishops, elected the Bishop of Norwich to the archiepiscopal see. In the mean time Reginald reached Rome, but the Pope refused to ratify his election, until he had received further information on the subject.

Whilst Reginald's cause was hanging in suspense, the Bishops of the diocese of Canterbury, sent a strong remonstrance to the court of Rome, complaining of the invalidity of both elections, as both had been effected without their privity or consent. The Pope eagerly seized this opportunity of exercising his authority over both the King and Bishops

of England. He made some trivial excuse for sending no reply to the remonstrance sent by the King and the Bishop of Norwich, however, after some time he pronounced both elections void ; but added, that the convent of Christ-church, had in themselves, the undoubted right to elect an Archbishop, though there had been some irregularity in the election of Reginald. He therefore desired them to proceed immediately to a new election, and as he said, there were a sufficient number of them then at Rome to elect an Archbishop, he nominated for their election Cardinal Stephen Langton, an Englishman of great eminence. This insolent demand startled the monks, who objected that they could not do this without the consent of their convent, and that the King had compelled them to take an oath, not to acknowledge any person but the Bishop of Norwich for Archbishop of Canterbury. But remonstrance was vain ; the Pope was firm to his purpose, and at once absolved them from their oaths, and at last they all tamely submitted to chuse the person His Holiness had nominated, except Elias de Bainfield, who nobly withstood the insolent demand. Langton was consecrated by the Pope, at Viterbo, June 27th. A. D. 1207. The Pope was aware that the part he had acted in this

affair, would be warmly resented by the English court. To appease the King, he wrote him a very flattering letter, and accompanied it with a present of four golden rings, set with precious stones, which the Pope explained thus :—He desired the King to observe with the most serious attention, the form, the matter, and the colour of these rings. “The form,” said the Pope, “is round, representing eternity, which has neither beginning nor end; and hence you ought to learn your duty of aspiring from earthly to heavenly objects, from things temporal to things eternal. The number Four being a perfect square, denotes steadiness of mind, which neither prosperity nor adversity can subvert, fixed for ever on the solid basis of the four cardinal virtues. The matter, which is gold, the most precious of all metals, shadows out wisdom, the most precious of all accomplishments, and justly preferred by Solomon to riches, power, and all exterior attainments. The verdure of the emerald represents Faith; the blue colour of the sapphire, Hope; the redness of the ruby, Charity; the splendour of the topaz, Good Works.”*

* W. A. Russel, *Hist. Engl.* p. 151, 152.

This most absurd and ridiculous explanation given by the infallible Pontiff, was much admired by the ignorant monks, but it produced a very different effect on the mind of the King, who on hearing that the monks of Canterbury were determined to support that collusive election, his passion was inflamed almost to fury, and he issued the most positive commands to expel the monks from their convent. The King's orders were performed with the greatest punctuality, and two military Knights with an armed force entered the monastery sword in hand, charged the monks with high treason for electing the Sub-prior without the Royal assent, and the monks had to seek their safety by a precipitate flight.

Though the King's resentment could not effectually reach the court of Rome, yet he made them sensible how much he considered himself injured, by having a stranger imposed upon him for an Archbishop without his approbation. He sent a letter to the Pope, expressing in strong terms his indignation at his Holiness for invading the prerogatives of his crown, by nullifying the election of the Bishop of Norwich. He charged him with ingratitude to the English nation, from whom he received more advantages than from all the other countries on this side the

Alps. In the conclusion of his letter he tells him plainly, "that as he was determined to maintain the election of the Bishop of Norwich, and would rather part with his blood than with the just rights of his crown,—that unless his Holiness would gratify him in this affair, he would prevent all appeals to the Holy see, and be content with the learning and sufficiency of his own Prelates, without any application to a foreign authority."

The language of King John was such as became a King of England to the Bishop of Rome, and doubtless would have produced the desired effect, had not the weak compliances and unwarrantable concessions of his predecessors to the court of Rome, enabled INNOCENT to bid defiance to this unfortunate Prince. The Pope wrote a reply to the King's letter, but instead of making suitable concessions for his audacious insult, he told him, "that it was in vain to think of opposing one, who was vicar to, and supported the authority of him, at whose name every knee must bow."* He desired him to reflect on the consequences that attended a similar opposition in his father Henry; and not to resist the church of God any longer, but to remember it was that

* M. Paris, p. 156.

cause for which the holy martyr St. Thomas sacrificed his life, and was now so justly venerated by the people. The epistles of Pope Innocent on this controversy, exposes the springs, and secret machinations of the court of Rome, which soon after involved this country in the greatest calamities. The sceptre of ecclesiastic monarchy, was now in the hands of a young, daring, active Prelate; a man of great talent, and unbounded ambition, well qualified for finishing the vast designs projected by the court of Rome; and whose history exhibits to the world, what base designs have been carried on under the cover of religion, and rendered sacred by a profane abuse of the name of Christ. Though Innocent found John firm to his purpose, yet, knowing that the King's vices had rendered him contemptible to his subjects, he could not depend on them for support; and the Pope being determined to carry his point, immediately laid the kingdom of England under an interdict, and commanded the Bishops of London, Ely, and Worcester to pronounce the sentence, which was executed forthwith.

This wicked and inhuman act of the Roman Pontiff, exasperated John in the highest degree, and had he confined his resentment to the Pope and his agents, the three

Bishops who executed his unrighteous sentence, he would have been supported by the strength of the kingdom. But in his fury he swore that he would put out the eyes, and cut off the noses of all the Roman Clergy he could find in his dominions. He wrote to the Pope, and told him that he considered his proceedings an insult upon royalty,—that he was determined to support the election of the Bishop of Norwich to the utmost extremity,—that if the Pope refused to do him justice in this particular, he would prohibit all intercourse between his subjects and the see of Rome.

This letter was written with a firmness of tone such as became a King of England, however it might mortify the pride of the Roman Pontiff, who had begun to trample under his feet the majesty of Kings. But the contest proved very unequal. The Pope had attained to such a height of power, that with a breath he could shake the thrones of the most powerful monarchs, and lay their diadems in the dust; whilst the King had by his indolence lost his dominions abroad, and by his base conduct, the affections of his subjects at home. The effects of the interdict, under which the kingdom had now lain nearly two years, was one scene of confusion and dismay. All religious

services were suspended, except baptizing children, hearing confessions, and administering the sacraments to the dying. The dead were brought out of the towns and villages and without any ceremony, buried in ditches and by the sides of the highway. The honour of God and the care of souls, were sacrificed to the tyranny, ambition, and wickedness of the court of Rome.

But the calamities of King John and his unhappy kingdom, did not terminate here ; for by a piece of bad policy he gave further advantage to his enemies. The King had received the strongest proof of the fidelity of his Chancellor Wells, during the interdict, and as a reward for his integrity, the King generously promoted him to the vacant see of Lincoln ; and sent him into Normandy to receive his consecration from the Archbishop of Rouen, with a positive command not to acknowledge Langton, whom the Pope had appointed to the see of Caunterbury. But in virtue of his promotion to a bishopric, he found his allegiance was transferred to another Sovereign ; consequently, the King's commands had no weight with Wells, who in direct opposition to which, went and received his ordination from Langton. The King resented his conduct by seizing the temporalities of the bishopric ; but the de-

VOL II. O

fection of the Chancellor, so weakened his confidence in his friends, that his firmness forsook him, and his anxiety now was, how he might secure a safe retreat. But John had not yet felt the full effect of the pious rage of Pope Innocent, who proceeded another step, and pronounced the dreadful sentence of excommunication against King John, A. D. 1209, and commanded the Bishops of London, Ely, and Worcester, to publish it in England. These Bishops, who were residing on the continent, sent copies of the sentence to the Clergy who remained in England, and of the Pope's commands, to publish it in their churches. But such was their dread of the King's displeasure, that none of them had courage to execute these commands. However, the sentence did not long remain a secret, but became the subject of common conversation in all companies. Even Geoffrey Archdeacon of Norwich, and one of the King's Judges, when sitting on the bench in the exchequer at Westminster, declared to the other Judges, that the King was excommunicated, and that he did not think it lawful for him to act any longer in his name; for which, he was thrown into prison where he soon after died.*

* M. Paris, p. 159.

The Pope was not a little disappointed, in finding that his sentence of excommunication had produced so little effect in alienating the laity from their King; he therefore sent several letters containing both threats and promises, but they also proved ineffectual, for the King executed the only two successful expeditions of his reign, while under sentence of excommunication. From which we infer, that had John continued to act with firmness, and secured the affections of his subjects by a mild and just administration, he might have bid defiance to all the thunders of the vatican, and have saved himself and kingdom from the ignominious yoke of a foreign Priest.

When the King was preparing for his expedition into Wales, he fixed his head quarters at Northampton, where he was attended by his great council. The Pope had sent two Legates into England, under the specious pretence of accommodating the difference between the church and state, but their real object was to learn the King's intentions. The King admitted them to an audience before this assembly; when they informed him, that his Holiness had commissioned them to restore peace to the English nation, on condition, that the King

make restitution to the ecclesiastics, and receive the Archbishop into favour.

John replied, that he was willing to make restitution as far as he could, but if ever the Archbishop came into England, he would hang him immediately. On this a long and violent debate ensued; in the course of which, the King made another proposition, "That if the Pope would depose Langton, he would submit for him to nominate another Primate."—To the King's proposal, Pandulphus the legate made the following insolent reply;—"That it was not the custom of the holy church to degrade an Archbishop without sufficient reason, but it had been used to humble Princes who rebelled against it." With this the council broke up, when the audacious legate with a loud voice, published the sentence of excommunication against the King, absolved all his subjects from their oaths of allegiance, degraded him from his royal dignity, and declared that neither he nor any of his posterity should ever reign in England.*

We are astonished that a man of King John's temper, did not immediately order the legate into prison for his insolence; but these were unhappy times, when the

* Burton Monast. p. 165, 166, Ext Warner's Eccl. Hist. v I. p. 425.

most contemptible agents of the Pope, were sure of protection whilst offering the grossest insults to the greatest Monarchs.

But his Holiness Pope Innocent III, had not yet spent all his spleen against King John; for he pronounced the solemn sentence of excommunication against all who should obey him, or have any intercourse or connexion with him. About the same time that these sentences arrived in England, the Pope employed a vile impostor, one Peter the Hermit, to go up and down preaching against the King, and predicting that he would not be the King of England on next ascension day. The presumptuous declarations of this wild enthusiast, were as firmly believed by those who heard him, as if they had heard them uttered by a voice from heaven. Many of the barons, under the strong excitement of their superstitious fears, began to waver in their attachment to the King. This was intimated to him by the King of Scotland, and by his natural daughter the Princess of Wales, which alarmed him not a little, and caused him to stagger in his resolutions.

In the mean time, the Pope proceeded under the covert pretence of providing an effectual remedy for the church of England, and subduing the obstinacy of King John.

Accordingly in a conclave at Rome, John, who was in England, was tried by his accusers and convicted of rebellion against the holy see, when this sentence was passed upon him; "that the Pope should depose him, and appoint another King over England." The sentence of deposition was immediately thundered out, and the Pope appointed Philip, King of France, to put it in execution; who as a reward for the services he would render to holy mother church, was not only to have all his sins forgiven, and a seat in heaven, "but the fee simple of the crown of England to him and his heirs for ever." This was a temptation which Philip had neither wisdom nor virtue to resist; but blinded by his own ambition, and guided in his measures by the invidious Pontiff, he became the champion of the church, and prepared to invade England with a numerous fleet and powerful army.

King John was apprized of the preparations made by the French, to meet which, he manned a strong fleet, and put himself at the head of an army of sixty thousand men. Every preparation being now made for answering the purposes of the Pope, he sent two knights templars into England, to inform the King that Pandulphus was in France, and with the King's permission,

would come over with proposals for an accommodation from the Pope. The King consented for the legate to come, who opened his commission with a letter from the Pope, in which he tells the King, that "blessing and cursing were set before him, but that if he did not submit to the terms prescribed and sent by Pandulphus, he would deliver the church of England, as God did that of Israel out of Egypt, by a strong hand." That this menace might not fail to produce the desired effect, the vile legate reminds the King how the Pope had humbled all the Princes who had presumed to oppose him;—drew a frightful picture of the present crisis, founded upon the number of the French army,—the disloyalty of his nobility and principal subjects, who, he assured him, had sent an invitation to Philip to invade his kingdom, and a promise of assisting him against their Sovereign.

Having by these false representations sufficiently alarmed the King's fears, he then told him there was yet one way by which he might avert the impending storm, which was, that of throwing himself into the arms of the church; where doubtless, on his faithful promise of future obedience, his Holiness would receive him as a merciful father receives a repenting son, and would not

fail to defend him with the shield of his protection. Never was a Prince placed in a more perplexing situation, than that in which King John found himself at this time. The dangers were equally great on either hand, and no time was allowed him to deliberate. In this unhappy dilemma, his spirits sunk beneath his misfortunes, and he yielded to take an oath to submit to the award of Innocent.

This scheme of his Holiness having so far succeeded, he now took off the mask, and shewed that his intention was, to raise and humble the Princes of the earth at his pleasure. In his letter to Langton, the Pope owns that the terms imposed upon the King, "were with great deliberation formed at Rome;" which are as follows, "That the King should surrender and yield up the kingdoms of England and Ireland, and for the time to come hold both as fees of the papacy; the former under the yearly tribute of seven hundred marks, and the latter under the tribute of three hundred."* These conditions were subscribed by the King and a number of his Barons, May 13th, A. D. 1213.

The preliminary arrangements being made, the King repaired to Dover church, attended

* Warner's Eccles. Hist. vol. 1, Cent. xiii, p. 428.

by the legate and a number of his great officers of state, where in the presence of all the people, he took the crown from off his head, and placed it at the legate's feet, who received the King's homage for his own kingdom, in the name of Pope Innocent III, and the church of Rome. After this he signed a charter, by which he gave up the patronages of all the churches in England that were in the gift of the crown ; and in the declaration says, that it was of his own free will, and with the advice and consent of all the barons of the realm, that he made this resignation of his crown and kingdom, as the only means of making atonement for his sins against God and the church. To bind his fetters still faster, the legate compelled him to take the oath of obedience which is required of vassals by their Sovereign. John was also compelled to reverse the sentences against the banished nobility, Bishops, clergy and monks, and make satisfaction for the losses they had sustained during the interdict ; and by letters patent to invite them to return to England, and to inform them that several of the nobility and Bishops had bound themselves by oath to see the above conditions faithfully performed.

The Pope by his legate having degraded and enslaved the King of England, he took

possession of the crown and sceptre, on the Monday before Ascension-day, and kept them five days. This detention of the crown and sceptre, was in part, to fulfil the prediction which Peter the Hermit had been sent to deliver, that John would not be King on Ascension-day. But the fulfilment of the prediction, did not prevent the King from ordering Peter to be hanged for a false prophet. We cannot but pity the fate of the poor deluded hermit, as he only performed the part assigned him by the planners of this royal ecclesiastical drama. We certainly think that this agent of the Pope who had employed Peter, should, whilst he had the ensigns of royalty in his possession, have interposed on his behalf, and have prevented him being hanged for his faithful services to the see of Rome. But Pandulphus having executed his commission so much to his own satisfaction, was in such haste to carry the tidings to Rome, that he not only left the hermit to his fate, but left the kingdom, without either giving the King absolution, or taking off the interdict.

The legate found little difficulty in accommodating matters with the exiled Bishops and clergy, as he took with him about eight thousand pounds, as part of what they were to receive for damages; but he had a more

difficult part to perform with the King of France, who, as directed by the Pope, had both his fleet and army ready to go and take possession of the throne of England. John having resigned his kingdom into the hands of the Pope, Pandulphus commanded Philip, in the name of the Roman Pontiff, not to attempt any thing against the King of England, who was now become the vassal of the holy see. This insolent command was highly resented by Philip, but expostulation was vain; for though he saw the Pope had been using him as a stalking-horse by which to attain greater temporal power, yet he was aware that his safest way was to submit, or he should be visited with the thunders of the church, the dreadful effects of which he had just witnessed. Thus in those days of darkness and superstition, did an old infirm Priest, sitting in his chamber at Rome, regulate all the motions of the most powerful Princes just as he pleased.

Soon after John had made this execrable submission to the Pope, Stephen Langton, whose promotion to the see of Canterbury had produced such a fatal contest; returned to England with the rest of the exiled Bishops and clergy, with high expectations of receiving the most ample satisfaction for all the damages they had sustained. The

Archbishop and Bishops waited upon the King at Winchester, who entreated their compassion for himself and kingdom, and on taking an oath to govern according to law and justice, he absolved his Majesty from the excommunication, but still left the kingdom under the interdict.

The clergy not receiving that compensation for damages they expected, began loudly to complain, that when the Pope had gained his own ends, he became careless of the interests of his friends. These complaints were not without a foundation in fact; for about Michaelmas this year (1213) Nicholas Bishop of Tusculum, arrived in England as the Pope's legate, and regulated all ecclesiastical affairs in the most arbitrary manner, without consulting with the Primate or any of the clergy. In filling up the vacant benefices, he paid no attention to those who had suffered so much in the papal cause, but bestowed them on his own creatures, or those recommended by the King;* and the legate had instructions, that "if the chapters should make any opposition to those whom his Majesty should recommend, he (the legate) should compel them to obedience by the censures of the church."†

* M. Paris, p. 171. † Warner's Eccl. Hist. vol. I, p. 432.

The conduct of the legate was exceedingly galling to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who called a provincial synod of his suffragans and clergy at Dunstable, in January, A. D. 1214. At this synod, the clergy who had contributed to degrade their King and enslave their country to serve the interests of the court of Rome, could not believe that the legate was acting agreeable to the instructions of that court, and therefore appealed to the Pope for redress. The Archbishop sent a deputation of two clergymen to the legate who was then at Burton-upon-Trent, to inform him that he had appealed to the Pope against his proceedings, and to inhibit him from granting institution, to any more prelates or priests within the province of Canterbury. But all the attention the legate paid to this summons was, he sent Pandulphus to the court of Rome, to plead his cause against any who might appear there as his accusers.*

A general discontent prevailed throughout the kingdom, that the interdict was not taken off, which the Pope had left on as a piece of policy, till he saw whether the kingdom would abide by the King's agreement; but instead of the King using prudent means to calm the minds of his subjects, he

* M. Paris, p. 172.

considered himself so secure under the guardianship of his sovereign the Pope, that he paid little or no attention to any thing but his licentious pleasures ; leaving his arbitrary ministers to levy an enormous tax on the discontented subjects, to defray the expences of a war with France. The King being informed how discontent prevailed, he renewed his submission to the Pope accompanied by a large sum of money, which procured from his holiness a commission to his legate to remove the interdict, which was performed with great pomp and solemnity, in the cathedral of St. Paul's, London, June 29th, A. D. 1214, after it had continued six years, three months, and fourteen days.*

When the legate first came over, the King offered a hundred thousand marks as a compensation for the losses sustained by the ecclesiastics ; but the Bishops objected to the sum, as not being sufficient to cover the damages. But such a change had taken place in the mind of the infallible pontiff, that he now espoused the cause of the King against the ecclesiastics, with as much zeal and interest, as they had shewn in supporting the Pope in opposition to the King.—Innocent sent an order to the legate, for the King to pay no more than forty thousand

* M. Paris, p. 173. Extr. Henry, vol. 5, p. 448.

marks ; which was divided among the Archbishop and monks of Canterbury, the Bishops of London, Hereford, Ely, Lincoln, and Bath. The rest of the sufferers consisting of a number of abbots, and abbesses, priors, monks, nuns, secular clergy, and laymen, when they applied to the legate for damages, received only this mortifying answer ; “ that he had no instructions from the Pope concerning them, and he could not act beyond his commission ;” and this appears to have been all the remuneration they ever received.* Nor was the appeal of Simon Langton, brother to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who went to Rome to prosecute the charge of his brother and his clergy against the legate, attended with any better success ; for Pandolphus who was agent for the legate, having painted King John in the most amiable colours, as a most pious, just, and humble prince, and represented the primate and his clergy, as excessively rigid and covetous in their demands of restitution, and enemies to the just prerogatives of the King, they were dismissed without any redress : a treatment, which (says Dr. Henry) “ they had merited for espousing the cause of Rome against their King and country, but which

* M. Paris, p. 174.

they had no reason to expect from that court whose cause they had espoused."

The clergy of England soon learnt how much they had improved their privileges by transferring their allegiance from their lawful sovereign to the see of Rome. The see of York being vacant by the death of Geoffrey, his Holiness wrote to the dean and chapter to choose such a person as his legate should advise, and "that no one should presume by fraud or violence to frustrate his commands." Having received his Majesty's license, the dean and chapter met and chose for their bishop, Simon Langton, who had been high in favour with the court of Rome during the interdict; but Innocent having changed his measures, declared the election void, and compelled them to receive the Bishop of Worcester for their Archbishop.

The scandalous conduct of King John in putting his kingdom under the papal jurisdiction, and at the same time appearing altogether insensible of his disgrace, rendered him contemptible in the eyes of his nobles, who considered him unfit to guard the rights of others, that would so easily part with the prerogatives of his crown. The number of discontents were daily increasing through the nation, in which they were joined by many of the ecclesiastics, who had as much

cause to be dissatisfied with the conduct of the Pope, as the barons had with the King. The Pope warmly espoused the cause of his vassal King John, and was not sparing of his spiritual thunders against the disaffected barons and their adherents.

To convince the world that he was in earnest, and let the clergy know what they were to expect from him if they interfered in the affair, he laid the Archbishop of Canterbury, though one of his own creatures, under the sentence of suspension; not being satisfied with his political conduct. But the barons were not to be diverted from their purpose, either by the thunders of the Pope, or the warlike preparations of the King; for on the 6th of January, 1215, they waited upon the King, and demanded a confirmation of the liberties granted to their ancestors by Henry I. in his charter, a copy of which they produced. After various attacks and repulses, in which advantage frequently changed sides, the recording of which belongs more to the civil than to the ecclesiastical historian, on Friday, June 19th, A. D. 1215, in a large meadow between Windsor and Stanes, King John signed the famous charter called *Magna Charta*, or *The Great Charter* of English liberty and privileges.

The King soon repented granting this charter, and sent his ambassadors to his sovereign the Pope, complaining that he had been driven to the rash act by the unruly conduct of his refractory barons. When the ambassadors had read some of the articles in the charter to the Pope, his Holiness knit his brows, and swore by St. Peter, "that he would not suffer a King who bore the sign of the cross, and was a vassal of the Holy See, to be treated in that manner with impunity."* To execute these threats, he issued one bull August 24th, annulling the great charter, and not long after another denouncing excommunication against the barons and all their favourers.† But though the English barons were greatly annoyed with these Roman bulls, they failed to produce their intended effect, and after an arduous struggle, this *Great Charter*, the palladium of English liberty was fully established.

* M. Paris, p. 184. † Rymer Fœd, t. 1, p. 204, 205, 508.

CHAPTER XVII.

The fourth Lateran council.—On transubstantiation — The Pope taxes the Clergy—Civil war between the King and his barons.—Death and character of King John.—Prince Henry proclaimed King, and the Earl of Pembroke appointed regent.—The Pope's new scheme to squeeze money from the church.—Death and character of Archbishop Langton.—The great dissention about electing a new primate brought a heavy tax on the nation.—A conspiracy formed to turn out all the Italian clergy.—The Pope nullifies three successive elections made by the monks for a new primate, and himself appointed Edmund Rich.—Cardinal Otho held a pompous council at St. Pauls.—Contentions about electing a new Bishop of Winchester.—A spirited remonstrance presented to the King against the abuses both in the church and state.—The primate complained to the Pope of abuses in the church.—He retired into a monastery in France and died there.—The legate robbed of all the money he had extorted from the English.—Boniface elected primate.—The barons drive Martin the legate out of England.—Their appeal to the council of Lyons.

The pontifical power of the Roman see, was raised to its highest altitude by Innocent III, who summoned a general council to meet in the church of St. Saviour de Lateran, at Rome, in November, A. D. 1215, and is generally called the fourth Lateran

council. There were present at this council, four hundred and twelve Bishops, besides an incredible number of Abbots, priors, and inferior clergy. This is the first general council ever called by the authority of the Pope, as the summoning a general council had always been considered a branch of the imperial or royal authority. This was therefore a formal assumption of the imperial as well as ecclesiastical monarchy. In all the ancient councils, it was customary to consider and debate on every subject brought before the assembly, and each member having wrote his suffrage, it was determined by a majority, and then to decree it in the name of the council. But Innocent took a shorter way than this, for the seventy canons decreed in this council, had all been previously prepared, and were read and passed by the sole authority of the Pope, without any deliberation or debate; though some of the subjects were not only new, but in direct opposition to the views and judgement of many of the members.* The first canon contains the confession of faith, in which the new doctrine of transubstantiation is inserted in these strong terms. "The body and blood of Christ are contained really in the sacrament of the altar under the species

* Du Pin. Eccles. Hist. cent 13, col 6.

‘ of bread and wine ; the bread being tran-
“ substantiated into the body of Jesus Christ,
“ and the wine into his blood, by the power
“ of God.” The reason assigned for this
wonderful transubstantiation is, “ That we
“ might receive of Christ’s nature, what he
had received of ours.”* We have called this
a new doctrine, because neither the doctrine
nor the term were known in the seventh
century, when the famous controversy was
held between the Scotch and Roman clergy
about the time of holding Easter. Had this
absurd and monstrous doctrine ever been
broached before that period, we may safely
infer it would not have passed at that time
unnoticed.

But we have still more positive proof, that
the Roman Catholics’ boasted claim to an-
tiquity in support of this doctrine, is without
any foundation in fact. In the eleventh
century, the inferior clergy were found so
defective in their education, that it was found
necessary to furnish them with a course of
homilies or sermons, containing such doctrines
as were necessary to be believed, and such
duties as were to be practised, which were
appointed to be read publicly in the church.
The old English translation of this collection
of homilies is still in manuscript in the Bod-

* 1d. *ibid.*

leian library, and also in the library of Bennet college, Cambridge. In this collection is a sermon upon the sacrament for Easter-day, by Alfrick, which proposes to instruct the people in the true meaning of this mystery. He first shews how this institution was typified under the law by the paschal lamb; and that some things are said of our Saviour literally, and others figuratively, and then shews that in this last sense, the bread and wine are called his body and blood, as appears from the following extract. "The bread and wine which are consecrated by the priest, represent one thing to the exterior senses, and another to the minds of those who believe. There is a great deal of difference between the invisible virtue of this holy sacrament, and what it appears to us in the qualities of its own nature. In its own nature it is corruptible bread, and corruptible wine; but by virtue of the divine institution, it is truly the body and blood of Christ upon consecration, not in a corporeal but in a spiritual manner. The body in which he suffered, and the eucharistical body are widely different; the first was born of the blessed virgin, and consisted of blood, bones, nerves, and limbs, animated with a rational soul: but the body which we call

“encharistical, is made up of several grains
“of wheat, without either blood, or bone,
“or nerve, or limb, or soul. Moreover,
“the body of Christ which suffered and
“rose from the dead, is eternal and impassible, and no more liable to decay or death ;
“whereas the eucharist is not eternal but
“corruptible, subject to the force of time,
“and divisible into many parts. The sacrament is a type and a pledge, but the body
“of our Lord Jesus Christ is the truth and
“reality of the representation. God has
“vouchsafed to give us this pledge or earnest, till we come to the truth itself, and
“then the pledge will disappear.
“this sacrifice is not the body in which
“Christ suffered for us, nor the blood which
“he shed, but it is made his body and blood
“spiritually.” Thus we see that the doctrine of transubstantiation was not received in the church of England, for more than a thousand years after the sacrament of the Lord’s supper was instituted by our Saviour. Since then, what thousands upon thousands has the church of Rome put to death in the most cruel manner, for not believing this most absurd and novel doctrine ; which is a most violent outrage on the reason and common sense of mankind. Dr, Southy remarks, that “ of all the corruptions of christianity,

there was none which the Popes so long hesitated to sanction as this, which is founded upon taking the figurative words of Scripture in a literal sense. When this question was brought before Hildebrand, he not only inclined to the opinion of Berenger, by whom it was opposed, but pretended to consult the Virgin Mary, and then declared that she had pronounced against it. Nevertheless, it prevailed, and was finally declared by Innocent III, at the fourth lateran council, to be a tenet necessary to salvation. The priest when he performed this stupendous function of his ministry, had before his eyes, and beheld in his hands, the Maker of heaven and earth: and the inference which they deduced from so blasphemous an assumption was, that the clergy were not to be subject to any secular authority, seeing that they could create God the Creator!"*

The third canon which was passed at this council, commands Kings and Princes to extirpate all heretics in their territories, under the penalty of being excommunicated, and deprived of their dominions, the execution of which, gave birth to the most horrifying scenes of cruelty and blood. There are several other canons in the same collection, which shew the great encroachments made by the court of Rome, on the civil and

* Book of the church vol. 1 p. 326.

religious rights of mankind in this dark period.

In summoning such numbers of the clergy to attend this council, the Pope had another important point, to carry which his policy kept out of sight for a season. Innocent had not only assumed the prerogative of disposing of kingdoms and absolving subjects from their oaths of allegiance ; but that he had a right to dispose of all the church revenues, as the wants of the see of Rome might require. He had now the most favourable opportunity of trying how his plans would operate, and began by taxing the dignitaries of the church. The new Archbishop of York, with ten thousand marks, and the abbot of St. Albans with a hundred, and others with such sums as his infallibility thought proper to name.

The sum of money thus extorted from the clergy was immense, to secure which, the Pope had made previous arrangements with the merchants of Rome, to furnish them with money on their own securities. He also ordered a twentieth part of the whole estate of the church to be levied, and every city was commanded to raise such a number of men for prosecuting the reformation of the church, and carrying on the war in Palestine.

Whilst the Pope was oppressing the clergy by these most exorbitant demands for money to support the Roman see, the nation was suffering in the severest manner, the effects of a civil war between King John and his barons. Under the galling oppressions of John's government, as a desperate remedy, the confederate barons invited the King of France to send his son Prince Lewis, to whom they made an offer of the crown and kingdom of England. This was a temptation too strong, for the virtue of the French King to resist. The Pope sent his legate into France to forbid Philip "to carry arms against the patrimony of St. Peter;" and informed him, that "the illustrious King of England, was a vassal of the Roman church." Philip followed the example set him by the Pope, by professing one thing and practising another. To avoid the thunders of the church, he pretended not to approve of the expedition of his son; but at the same time he furnished him with a fleet and army, and gave him his blessing when he set out for England.* As the Pope's prohibition could not prevent Lewis from undertaking the expedition, the legate followed close upon his heels, and laid the city of London, together with such barons as

* Dr. Warner, vol. I. p. 442.

joined Lewis under an interdict, and then pronounced sentence of excommunication on the French prince and his followers, with all the solemnity of tolling the bells, and lighting torches. These were but the beginning of sorrows to this unhappy nation, which the miseries of an intestine war soon overspread. All these with the long train of evils which followed, were the baneful fruit of popish policy, in alienating the clergy from their lawful sovereign ; for a house divided against its elf cannot stand.

As it does not enter into our plan, either to record all the military movements, or detail the civil transactions of the state, we shall only notice here, that, while the nation was groaning under the miseries of a bloody and unnatural war, Providence opened a way for its deliverance by the death of King John, which event took place suddenly at Swinstead Abbey, October 9th, A.D. 1216. Some say that he died of a flux, but others, and not without cause, believe that he came to his death by poison, administered to him by a monk of that Abbey.*

Without any violation of charity, we may say, a more worthless King than John had never been decorated with the English crown. For some of his great faults, no

* Dr. Howell's *Historiæ Anglicanæ*, p. 77.

apology can be made ; such as, the unnatural rebellion against his indulgent father, and afterwards his brother Richard,—the murder of his nephew Arthur,—the divorce of his queen Aviso,—the ignominious circumstances under which he resigned his crown and prerogatives, into the hands of the Pope. The imbecile manner in which he submitted to papal tyranny, has left an indelible blot upon his reign ; part of which is attributable to the cold indifference of some, and the refractory conduct of others of the nobility, in not enabling him to defend his rights. Though it may justly be said of John, that he had not one good qualification for governing a nation, yet the nation has ever since enjoyed the benefit of an act, to which his bad government gave birth, the signing of *Magna Charta*.

As soon as possible after the death of John, the Earl of Pembroke convened all the loyal barons, and presented before them Prince Henry, the eldest son of John, then about ten years old, and addressing them, said, “ behold your king.” He then told them, that of the conduct of their late sovereign they had just cause to complain, yet it would be unjust to take the crown from the royal line of England, and give it to a foreigner. When the Earl had finished his speech, the whole assembly cried out as with one voice,

"let Henry be the King." The ceremony of his coronation was performed at Gloucester, at which time he swore fealty to the Pope as his superior lord ; and the Earl of Pembroke was appointed guardian to the young king, and protector of the realm during the minority. The Pope warmly espoused the cause of Henry III., and commanded his legate again to pronounce the sentence of excommunication against Lewis, and all his adherents.* Soon after this, a peace was concluded, and Lewis left the kingdom ; when the Pope compelled the clergy and barons of his party to pay a heavy penalty, for having dared to despise the thunders of the church of Rome.† The dissensions which had agitated the nation for many years, being happily brought to a close, and Archbishop Langton having procured reconciliation with the Pope, and received a Cardinal's cap, he convened a synod at Oxford, A.D. 1222, in which forty-nine canons were made, the principle articles in which had been settled in former councils. By the twenty-eight canon, clergymen are prohibited to keep concubines in their own houses, or to go to them in other places so openly as to occasion scandal.‡

* M. Paris, p. 292. Wilkin. Concil. t. 1, p. 546, † M. Paris, p. 299. ‡ Wilkin. Concil. t. 1, p. 590. Extr. Dr. Henry, vol. 3, p. 3.

Pope Innocent III, was succeeded by Honorius III, who improving upon the plans of his predecessors for raising money, formed a scheme, which, had it been brought into operation, would have brought immense treasure into the papal coffers. The Pope represented the poverty of the Holy See to be such, that he was under the necessity of making exorbitant demands, on those who sought her favours. To enable him to administer justice on less objectionable terms, he proposed, that the revenues of two prebendaries in every cathedral, and two monks in every monastery, should be granted to the Pope, in all the countries in communion with the church of Rome. When the legate laid this proposal before the Bishops and abbots, they were so surprised at the unreasonableness of the demand, that they deemed it most advisable not to return any answer. But the subject did not die here; it was brought before the parliament of England on the King being declared of age, A. D. 1226, when this cold answer was returned to the papal legate; "That this affair concerned all christendom; and they would conform to the resolutions of other christian churches."* Thus failed the scheme of the infallible Honorius III.

* Henry vol. 8. p. 3.

On the 9th of July, A. D. 1228, died Cardinal Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury. The arbitrary manner in which the Pope appointed him to that see, gave rise to a long and unhappy contest ; but it is doubtful whether that age, produced a person better qualified for discharging the functions of his high office. He was an Englishman by birth, and displayed a landable zeal for the liberties of his country, in his opposition to the papal usurpations. He protested in form, against the surrender King John made of his crown and kingdom to the Pope ; and refused to pronounce his sentence against the barons. Seeing the King trample on the liberties of the subjects, he communicated to the barons, the charter of Henry I, which he had found in the archives of his see, and greatly assisted them in obtaining the establishment of Magna Charta. If he was not one of the best Archbishops which had filled the chair of Canterbury, it was more his misfortune than his fault. Had he lived in a more enlightened age, under princes of greater virtue, and Popes of less ambition, he would have appeared as a bright ornament both to the church and state of England.

No sooner was this good Archbishop dead, than the monks of Canterbury applied to the King for leave to elect a new primate,

and without consulting the suffragan Bishops, made a hasty election of Walter de Hemisham, one of their own body. He disapproved of their choice, as a man of too little learning and experience for that high office; and the Bishops refused to acknowledge him as their Metropolitan, because of the ignominious death of his father, who was hanged for thieving, and his own character was not irreproachable. Both parties as usual appealed to the Pope, who suffered the case to hang in suspense for some time, as being too difficult to determine. But no sooner had the King authorised his commissioners to offer his Holiness a tenth of all the movables, both of the clergy and laity, than in the plenitude of his infallibility, he immediately discovered the invalidity of Hemisham's election; and to prevent all further contests, in virtue of his own power, he appointed Richard le Grand, Chancellor of Lincoln, to be Archbishop.* This was the first act of Gregory IX, in the affairs of England, who succeeded Honorius III, A. D. 1227.

This Pope, who was blessed with an infallible remembrance of the promises of the faithful, sent a legate into England to collect the tenths which the King had promised.

* T. Wykes, p. 41. M. Paris, p. 350.

This demand was powerfully opposed by the lay barons in the English parliament; but the united weight of the papal and regal power prevailed, and this heavy tax was collected with great exactness. If any of the inferior clergy pleaded their inability to pay, the legate obliged the Bishops to pay for them, and when any of them complained they had not money, he immediately presented them with the means which the INFALLIBLE PONTIFF had provided to meet their cases; a number of Italian usurers, who were ready to lend them money at an exorbitant interest.* Such were the tender mercies of Holy Mother church towards her children!!! The legate had scarcely finished his task, of collecting the price which the Pope had fixed on Richard's primacy, before the archiepiscopal chair, was again vacated by the death of Richard, which took place August 3rd, A. D. 1231, and opened the way for new disturbances. Historians speak of Richard as a man of undoubted piety, accompanied with great firmness and decision of character, who had he been spared to fill that important station, might have been a great blessing to the nation.

No sooner did the monks of Canterbury hear of Richard's death, than they applied

* M. Paris, p. 362,

for a licence to elect a successor. They made choice of Nevil, Bishop of Chichester, and lord Chancellor, who being high in the King's favour, he readily assented to his election, and invested him with the temporalities of the Bishopric. But this election was opposed by the Pope, who considered Nevil, who was remarkable for his fortitude and integrity, as being too warmly attached to the interest of the King. He therefore ordered the monks to proceed to a new election.

During the contest about a new primate, an unexpected confederacy was formed by a number of noblemen and others, to turn out all the Italian ecclesiastics, which the Pope had put into the most valuable livings in the kingdom, to the exclusion of the English. To insult the persons, and plunder the houses of these foreign clergy, was so agreeable to the whole nation, that they were banished out of the kingdom without any one attempting to prevent it. But if this affair passed off quietly in England, it produced a different effect at Rome. The Pope was enraged at the conduct of the English towards his favourites, and wrote to the King commanding him to punish without delay, all who were concerned in the expulsion of the Italian clergy, or he would excommunicate

the King, and lay the kingdom under an interdict. When the King came to inquire into the affair, he found such a number of both barons and Bishops, who had at least encouraged it, that he only sent one man to his Holiness as being the chief instrument, and imprisoning some of the sheriffs for neglecting to suppress the riot.*

In the mean time, the monks elected their sub-prior for their primate, and on receiving the King's approbation, he went to Rome to be consecrated by the Pope. When after the most strict investigation, no defect could be found either in his life or learning, the *infallible* pontiff discovered that he was too far advanced in years for that important station, and it was necessary that he should decline it in favour of one more active and vigorous. The monks being directed to make another choice, with the King's approbation they elected Bland, professor of divinity in the University of Oxford. But the Pope opposed Bland's election on the ground of him being a pluralist, and that he had bribed the monks to give him their votes. To save all further trouble of electing, his Holiness, in the plenitude of his apostolic power, appointed Edmund Rich, treasurer of Salis-

* Dr. Warner's Eccles. Hist. vol. I. p. 452.

bury, to be their Archbishop, who was chosen and consecrated accordingly.†

Whilst the nation had cause to complain of the unsteady conduct of the King, in managing the affairs of the state, a fresh cause of discontent was given by the arrival in England, A. D. 1237, of Cardinal Otho, the Pope's legate. The Archbishop of York, remonstrated with the King against the legate's coming without any notice being given, either to the clergy or the parliament. After his arrival, he wrote to the Bishops, abbots, and priors, requiring them to attend a council to be held on such a day at St. Paul's, London. A most pompous preparation was made for setting off the legate, who, fearing that some opposition would be made to some of the canons he had to pass against pluralities, he obtained a guard of two hundred men, who were placed privately about the cathedral. Nor was this precaution altogether unnecessary, for he could not get the canon against pluralities passed, but had to refer it to the Pope. In these canons, which are generally called, *the constitutions of Otho*; there is one against the clandestine marriages of the clergy, and another against their keeping concubines publicly, from which we may

† M. Paris. p. 385.

infer, that both practices were then prevalent in England.

On the death of Peter de Rupibus, Bishop of Winchester, he recommended the monks in the strongest terms, to elect the Queen's uncle, the Bishop of Valence to the vacant see. The monks objected to him on the ground that he was a foreigner, a man of a most vicious sanguinary temper; and very deficient in learning for such a station; and elected Raley, a man of eminent abilities, who was well known to the King. This election was opposed by the King, who said, that "Raley had killed more men with his tongue, than the other had with his sword," on which he seized the temporalities of the Bishoprick and cut down the timber. On seeing the King's conduct, the monks made another election, and returned Nevil, Bishop of Chichester, and lord chancellor. The King had lately been much incensed against Nevil, for refusing to deliver up the great seal when he required him, and severely reproved the convent for electing "such a hot-headed tempestuous prelate." Finding the monks were not disposed to make another election, the King sent a messenger to Rome, who soon got the election nullified by the apostolic authority; by whom his Holiness sent an order

to the convent, not to elect any Bishop of whom the King did not approve. About this time, the Queen's uncle died in Italy, and the Pope confirmed the election of Raleigh, who being still opposed by the King, retired into France, leaving the city of Winchester under an interdict, till he was recalled by, and reconciled to the King.*

The repeated encroachments made by the King and the court of Rome, upon the rights and liberties of the English subjects, had now become an intolerable burden, too heavy to be borne; and in a general assembly of the spiritual and temporal lords, held A. D. 1239, they drew up a remonstrance containing thirty-nine articles, in which they complain, that the King had by the advice of his counsellors, broken their charters,—detained the revenues of vacant Bishopricks and Abbeyes for his own use,—over-ruled the freedom of elections, and distressed his subjects with arbitrary impositions. These articles having received the unanimous consent of the whole English peerage, were presented to the King; but the confidence he had in the Pope's protection, made him deaf to the reasonable complaints of his subjects.

This appeal to the King having failed to remove the causes of complaint, the Arch-

* Dr. Warner's Eccles. Hist. vol. I. p. 457.

bishop of Canterbury wrote a letter of remonstrance to his Holiness, complaining that the canons were over-ruled, and the chapters deprived of their privileges, by the influence of the court. This complaint was accompanied with a large present from the peers to the Pope, who authorized the Archbishop to fill any see or Abbey, when it had been vacant six months. But the King got the act revoked before it came into operation.

After the legate had drained the churches and monasteries of immense sums, on pretence of procurations, absolutions from going to the holy war, and such like, he required a fifth of the revenues of all the English ecclesiastics, to carry on the war against the Emperor. The clergy at the first made a firm stand against his oppressive demands, until they found that the King and the Pope were acting in concert; as neither of them could carry on their oppressions without the aid of the other.

The Archbishop of Canterbury was distressed at seeing the nation impoverished by the unjust extortions of the court of Rome, which under such a Pope and such a King, it was not in his power to prevent, that he left the kingdom, and retired to the monastery of Pontigniac in France, where it is

believed he shortened his days, by mourning over the miseries of a bleeding nation. He died in the monastery, A.D. 1240,* having filled the chair of Canterbury eight years, and a few years after his death, was canonized by the council of Lyons.

After Cardinal Otho had squeezed all the money he could from the monasteries, by every art and stratagem he could devise; and from the clergy for preferments and pensions; he at last left the kingdom, to convey to his master the fruits of his mission. But before he reached Italy, he fell into the hands of the Emperor's officers, who stripped him of every shilling that he had so unjustly extorted from the English clergy; and when he arrived at Rome, he found death had deprived Pope Gregory IX. of his insatiable appetite for money. The King prevailed with the monks of Canterbury, partly by promises, to chuse Boniface, the Queen's uncle (or brother), to be Archbishop, though he was very unfit for the office. During his primacy, several nuncios and legates arrived in England, each improving upon the others arts of pillaging the unhappy kingdom. The patience of the English was at last spent, and the chief barons interposed to prevent the nation from being plundered by these Italian

* M. Paris, p. 532,

harpies. In A.D. 1245, they sent orders to the wardens of all the sea-ports, to seize all persons bringing any bulls or mandates from Rome. Not long after a messenger was seized with several bulls addressed to Martin, the Pope's legate, empowering him to exact more money from the clergy, on various pretences. The legate complained bitterly to the King of such a daring insult being offered to the head of the church. The King commanded the bulls to be restored; but the barons, in order to justify their conduct, and open the eyes of the deluded monarch, laid before him an account of the incredible sums sent from England to Rome. Besides what went direct into the pockets of the Pope, the church preferments possessed by Italians in England, amounted to sixty thousand marks *per annum*; a greater sum than the ordinary revenues of the crown. Henry, who had never examined into the case, was astonished at the fact; but he had neither spirit nor virtue to join with his people to put a stop to such oppressions. The barons, however, determined to proceed in the work, though unsupported by the King. Under the pretence of a tournament, they assembled at Dunstable, from whence they sent a knight to the legate, commanding him in their name, immediately to depart the kingdom. The

commission was executed in the spirit of a true English knight, who informed Martin the legate, that if he continued three days longer in England, he would infallibly be cut to pieces. Terrified with the bold declaration of the knight, the legate flew to the King for protection. But the legate soon found that it was not in the power of the King to defend him from the fury of a nation, driven to desperation by papal oppressions, and he departed with all possible speed.

This year (1245) a general council was held in the city of Lyons, consisting of one hundred and forty bishops, in which the Pope presided in person. The English barons sent very honourable ambassadors to lay their grievances before the council; and their letter of remonstrance breathes a spirit of good sense and independency, superior to the age in which they lived. After a free and full enumeration of the grievances under the tyranny of the court of Rome, it concludes with these bold and resolute expressions: "We can no longer, with any patience, bear the foresaid oppressions; which, as they are detestable to God and man, are intolerable to us; neither, by the grace of God, will we any longer endure them.* William Powerie, one of the ambassadors who pre-

* M. Paris. p. 666. Extr. Dr. Henry, vol. 8, p. 8.

sented this letter, made such a spirited speech to the council, shewing in such a clear light, the innumerable frauds and insatiable avarice of the court of Rome, that, for once, he brought a blush of shame on the face of his infallible holiness.* But this blush was all the atonement his Holiness made for the great injustice he had done to the English nation.

* Henry vol. 8. p. 9.

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This Pope, who was blessed with an infallible remembrance of the promises of the faithful, sent a legate into England to collect the tenths which the King had promised.

* T. Wykes, p. 41. M. Paris, p. 350.

This demand was powerfully opposed by the lay barons in the English parliament; but the united weight of the papal and regal power prevailed, and this heavy tax was collected with great exactness. If any of the inferior clergy pleaded their inability to pay, the legate obliged the Bishops to pay for them, and when any of them complained they had not money, he immediately presented them with the means which the INFALLIBLE PONTIFF had provided to meet their cases; a number of Italian usurers, who were ready to lend them money at an exorbitant interest.* Such were the tender mercies of Holy Mother church towards her children!!! The legate had scarcely finished his task, of collecting the price which the Pope had fixed on Richard's primacy, before the archiepiscopal chair, was again vacated by the death of Richard, which took place August 3rd, A. D. 1231, and opened the way for new disturbances. Historians speak of Richard as a man of undoubted piety, accompanied with great firmness and decision of character, who had he been spared to fill that important station, might have been a great blessing to the nation.

No sooner did the monks of Canterbury hear of Richard's death, than they applied

* M. Paris, p. 362,

lish were put to the expence of going to Rome to prosecute their rights, contrary to the indulgences of former popes. V. That in churches occupied by the Italians, there were neither alms, nor hospitality, nor preaching; and the care of souls was quite neglected. VI. That the close *non obstante*, which was generally inserted in all bulls, was absolutely destructive of all laws, customs, and privileges of the church and kingdom.

The letters from the King and the barons which accompanied the above articles, were written in a more bold and firm tone, threatening his Holiness, that if he did not immediately redress their grievances, they would do themselves justice.* The Pope resolved not to part with any of the advantages he had gained; and having read the letters, he returned this message to the ambassadors, "the King is at liberty to take his own measures, and I shall take mine." In this haughty and tyrannical manner, did the imperious pontiff conduct himself towards the heads of the English nation. He carried his arbitrary measures still further, and compelled the English prelates to subscribe the sentence of excommunication against the Emperor Frederick II, though he was bro-

* M. Paris, p. 699.

sented this letter, made such a spirited speech to the council, shewing in such a clear light, the innumerable frauds and insatiable avarice of the court of Rome, that, for once, he brought a blush of shame on the face of his infallible holiness.* But this blush was all the atonement his Holiness made for the great injustice he had done to the English nation.

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elect him, pleading his youth and want of experience for that important office. The King highly resented the conduct of the monks and told them, that as they thought Athelmar too young, he would keep the bishoprick in his own hands till he was of age to possess it. The following year A. D. 1250, the see of Winchester became vacant by the death of Bishop Raley, when the King went himself to Winchester to prevail on the monks to elect Athelmar. The convent stated the same objections at first, as had been urged by the chapter at Durham, but the King at last carried his point, on condition that the Pope would dispense with it. The Pope who had other favours to ask of the King, confirmed the election of his brother, though he was not consecrated for at least ten years after.

Notwithstanding the impoverished state of the nation through repeated oppressions, the Pope prevailed upon Henry to take the cross and engage in the holy war. To enable him to perform his vow, he demanded of the clergy, a tenth of their revenues for three years. The clergy assembled to consider the King's demand, and objected to comply on account of both the Archbishops being out of the kingdom; and at the same time told him in very uncourtly terms, of

restitution for his past injustice to a generous people; that the following year he sent his agents again into England, who were as violent in their extortions as any of their predecessors. The arrival of a fresh supply of these Roman harpies, roused the spirit of the English nation, who in their parliament resolved, that the intolerable oppressions brought upon the nation by the see of Rome, should be drawn up and sent to the Pope by a suitable embassy. The grievances stated by the clergy were digested under the following heads:—I. That the Pope not content with the annual payment of pence, had extorted large sums of money from the clergy, without the King's consent, contrary to the customs, rights, and liberties of the English nation. II. That the Pope had deprived the patrons of church livings, of presenting suitable persons, by conferring them on Italians, who, not understanding the English language, spent their revenues out of the kingdom. III. That the Pope oppressed the churches by exacting pensions from them. IV. That when an Italian ecclesiastic died, the living was immediately given to one of that nation, as if those benefices were entailed on the Italians;—that the Italians were invested without trouble or expence, whilst the Eng-

ceedings, with the greatest freedom and severity. He remarks, that the clause of *non obstante*, lately introduced into the papal bulls, is quite "inconsistent with the apostolic character." "That it has brought a "deluge of mischief upon Christendom, and "gives occasion to a great deal of inconsistency and breach of faith; it even shakes "the very foundations of trust and security "amongst mankind, and makes language "and letters almost insignificant." To that part of the bull which required him to bestow a benefice upon an infant, he replied, "Next to the sins of Lucifer and Antichrist, "there cannot be a greater defection, or "which carries a more direct opposition to "the doctrine of our Saviour and his apostles, than to destroy people's souls, by depriving them of the benefits of the pastoral "office; and yet those persons are guilty of "this sin, who undertake the sacerdotal "function, and receive the profits without "discharging the duty. From hence it is "evident, that those who bring such unqualified persons into the church, and debauch "the hierarchy, are much to blame; and "that their crimes rise in proportion to the "height of their station."* On reading this

* Collier, ch. Hist. vol. 1, p. 460. Warner, Eccles. Hist. vol. 1. p. 467.

remonstrance, written in such a strain of truth and freedom as Innocent had not been accustomed to hear, it threw his Holiness into such a furious passion, that he swore by St. Peter and St. Paul, that "if it was not for the gentleness of his own disposition, he would so confound that old dotting, deaf, impertinent fellow, who had out-lived his brains and his manners, that he would make him an astonishment and example to all the world." In his rage, his Holiness further exclaimed, "What! is not the King of England, his master, our vassal, or rather our slave? and will he not at the least sign of our's cast into prison, and destroy whom we please?" When the fury of Innocent had a little subsided, one of the Cardinals told him, "That the world began to discover the truth of many things contained in the Bishop's letter; and that if he persecuted a prelate so renowned for learning, piety, and uprightness of life, it might create the court of Rome a great many enemies." The Cardinals advised him to take no notice of the letter, as though he had never seen it.* But Innocent had not learned either to forgive, or take advice, but pronounced on Grosted the sentence of excommunication.

* Du. Paris. ch. Hist. vol. 2, p. 62.

believed he shortened his days, by mourning over the miseries of a bleeding nation. He died in the monastery, A.D. 1240,* having filled the chair of Canterbury eight years, and a few years after his death, was canonized by the council of Lyons.

After Cardinal Otho had squeezed all the money he could from the monasteries, by every art and stratagem he could devise; and from the clergy for preferments and pensions; he at last left the kingdom, to convey to his master the fruits of his mission. But before he reached Italy, he fell into the hands of the Emperor's officers, who stripped him of every shilling that he had so unjustly extorted from the English clergy; and when he arrived at Rome, he found death had deprived Pope Gregory IX. of his insatiable appetite for money. The King prevailed with the monks of Canterbury, partly by promises, to chuse Boniface, the Queen's uncle (or brother), to be Archbishop, though he was very unfit for the office. During his primacy, several nuncios and legates arrived in England, each improving upon the others arts of pillaging the unhappy kingdom. The patience of the English was at last spent, and the chief barons interposed to prevent the nation from being plundered by these Italian

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commission was executed in the spirit of a true English knight, who informed Martin the legate, that if he continued three days longer in England, he would infallibly be cut to pieces. Terrified with the bold declaration of the knight, the legate flew to the King for protection. But the legate soon found that it was not in the power of the King to defend him from the fury of a nation, driven to desperation by papal oppressions, and he departed with all possible speed.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

A powerful opposition against papal encroachments.—The English prelates compelled to subscribe to the Emperor's excommunication.—The Pope's extortions opposed.—The King got his brother elected Bishop of Winchester.—Bishop Grostede opposes the Pope.—His death and character.—The Pope's exorbitant demands upon the clergy rejected.—Council at Merton held by Boniface.—Some of the canons—Council at Lambeth.—The immense sums of money paid to the Pope for the crown of Sicily.—Othobon held a council at London.—Death and character of Henry III.—The Pope appoints Kilwarthby archbishop of Canterbury, in opposition to the monks.—Council at Lyons taxed the clergy with a tenth for six years.—Kilwarthby made cardinal, and Peckham made primate.—Holds a council at Reading, and another at Lambeth.—His letter to the King.—His controversy with Knapwell a friar.—Death of Archbishop Peckham, and election of Winchelsey.—The clergy refusing to be taxed creates a violent contention with the King.—Canons of the council of Merton.—Suspension of the Archbishop.—Parliament at Carlisle, presents a list of grievances to the Pope.

The ambassadors and prelates returned from the council, like men who had witnessed the departure of the last lingering ray of hope. Though his Holiness blushed at the exposure of his conduct before the council of Lyons, he was so far from making

restitution for his past injustice to a generous people,* that the following year he sent his agents again into England, who were as violent in their extortions as any of their predecessors. The arrival of a fresh supply of these Roman harpies, roused the spirit of the English nation, who in their parliament resolved, that the intolerable oppressions brought upon the nation by the see of Rome, should be drawn up and sent to the Pope by a suitable embassy. The grievances stated by the clergy were digested under the following heads:—I. That the Pope not content with the annual payment of pence, had extorted large sums of money from the clergy, without the King's consent, contrary to the customs, rights, and liberties of the English nation. II. That the Pope had deprived the patrons of church livings, of presenting suitable persons, by conferring them on Italians, who, not understanding the English language, spent their revenues out of the kingdom. III. That the Pope oppressed the churches by exacting pensions from them. IV. That when an Italian ecclesiastic died, the living was immediately given to one of that nation, as if those benefices were entailed on the Italians;—that the Italians were invested without trouble or expence, whilst the Eng-

lish were put to the expence of going to Rome to prosecute their rights, contrary to the indulgences of former popes. V. That in churches occupied by the Italians, there were neither alms, nor hospitality, nor preaching ; and the care of souls was quite neglected. VI. That the close *non obstante*, which was generally inserted in all bulls, was absolutely destructive of all laws, customs, and privileges of the church and kingdom.

The letters from the King and the barons which accompanied the above articles, were written in a more bold and firm tone, threatening his Holiness, that if he did not immediately redress their grievances, they would do themselves justice.* The Pope resolved not to part with any of the advantages he had gained ; and having read the letters, he returned this message to the ambassadors, "the King is at liberty to take his own measures, and I shall take mine." In this haughty and tyrannical manner, did the imperious pontiff conduct himself towards the heads of the English nation. He carried his arbitrary measures still further, and compelled the English prelates to subscribe the sentence of excommunication against the Emperor Frederick II, though he was bro-

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ther-in-law to their own King, and also to furnish a certain number of armed men to fight against him.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

A powerful opposition against papal encroachments.—The English prelates compelled to subscribe to the Emperor's excommunication.—The Pope's extortions opposed.—The King got his brother elected Bishop of Winchester.—Bishop Grostede opposes the Pope.—His death and character.—The Pope's exorbitant demands upon the clergy rejected.—Council at Merton held by Boniface.—Some of the canons.—Council at Lambeth.—The immense sums of money paid to the Pope for the crown of Sicily.—Othobon held a council at London.—Death and character of Henry III.—The Pope appoints Kilwarthby archbishop of Canterbury, in opposition to the monks.—Council at Lyons taxed the clergy with a tenth for six years.—Kilwarthby made cardinal, and Peckham made primate.—Holds a council at Reading, and another at Lambeth.—His letter to the King.—His controversy with Knapwell a friar.—Death of Archbishop Peckham, and election of Winchelsey.—The clergy refusing to be taxed creates a violent contention with the King.—Canons of the council of Merton.—Suspension of the Archbishop.—Parliament at Carlisle, presents a list of grievances to the Pope.

The ambassadors and prelates returned from the council, like men who had witnessed the departure of the last lingering ray of hope. Though his Holiness blushed at the exposure of his conduct before the council of Lyons, he was so far from making

restitution for his past injustice to a generous people,* that the following year he sent his agents again into England, who were as violent in their extortions as any of their predecessors. The arrival of a fresh supply of these Roman harpies, roused the spirit of the English nation, who in their parliament resolved, that the intolerable oppressions brought upon the nation by the see of Rome, should be drawn up and sent to the Pope by a suitable embassy. The grievances stated by the clergy were digested under the following heads:—I. That the Pope not content with the annual payment of pence, had extorted large sums of money from the clergy, without the King's consent, contrary to the customs, rights, and liberties of the English nation. II. That the Pope had deprived the patrons of church livings, of presenting suitable persons, by conferring them on Italians, who, not understanding the English language, spent their revenues out of the kingdom. III. That the Pope oppressed the churches by exacting pensions from them. IV. That when an Italian ecclesiastic died, the living was immediately given to one of that nation, as if those benefices were entailed on the Italians;—that the Italians were invested without trouble or expence, whilst the Eng-

lish were put to the expence of going to Rome to prosecute their rights, contrary to the indulgences of former popes. V. That in churches occupied by the Italians, there were neither alms, nor hospitality, nor preaching; and the care of souls was quite neglected. VI. That the close *non obstante*, which was generally inserted in all bulls, was absolutely destructive of all laws, customs, and privileges of the church and kingdom.

The letters from the King and the barons which accompanied the above articles, were written in a more bold and firm tone, threatening his Holiness, that if he did not immediately redress their grievances, they would do themselves justice.* The Pope resolved not to part with any of the advantages he had gained; and having read the letters, he returned this message to the ambassadors, "the King is at liberty to take his own measures, and I shall take mine." In this haughty and tyrannical manner, did the imperious pontiff conduct himself towards the heads of the English nation. He carried his arbitrary measures still further, and compelled the English prelates to subscribe the sentence of excommunication against the Emperor Frederick II, though he was bro-

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his tyranny, and the violation of his oaths. This opposition to the King was headed by the venerable Robert Grosted, Bishop of Lincoln, a man of such profound learning, deep piety, and undaunted courage, as would have rendered him an ornament to the church in any age. The character of this excellent prelate was well known in the court of Rome. When one of the best livings in his diocese becoming vacant, the Pope gave the living to an Italian who could not speak English, and sent a bull to the Bishop to institute him in the living; but when the Bishop had examined the candidate, he tore the bull in pieces, declaring, that to entrust the care of souls to men so unqualified for the ministry, was to do the devil's work;" for which he was, for a time, suspended at the court of Rome.

Pope Innocent IV. was one of the most superious pontiffs that ever filled the papal chair. He sent this Bishop a bull, which contained the scandalous clause of *non obstante*, so justly complained of in that age; so commanding the Bishop to bestow a considerable living in his gift upon the Pope's nephew, then an infant. The Bishop was far from complying with the commands in the bull, that he wrote a remonstrance to the Pope, in which he exposes his unjust pro-

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This demand surprised the Bishops, some of whom declared aloud, that they would lose their lives before they would submit to such tyranny. The nuncio complained of the bishops to the King, who told the bishop of London that he should soon feel the effects of both his and the Pope's displeasure. The bishop courageously replied, he knew that the King and the Pope were more powerful than himself, but if they removed his mitre, he would put a helmet in its place. But this did not prevent the nuncio from urging a compliance, alleging, that as all the churches belonged to their sovereign lord the Pope, he could dispose of their incomes as he pleased. The bishops were indignant at hearing this, and unanimously declared, that sooner than submit to such an imposition, they would suffer death, as their cause was more meritorious than that in which Becket suffered martyrdom. The nuncio perceiving that he had no chance of succeeding by violent measures, returned to Rome to acquaint his Holiness with the conduct of the bishops. The clergy sent the dean of St. Paul's to Rome, to state their reasons for refusing, but all the redress he could obtain was, that what the Pope had laid upon them to pay at once, he allowed them to pay by instalments.

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* See Spelman and Johnson's councils.

alarming apprehension. The barons wrote to the Pope complaining of those stretches of church power, and of the ignorance and immoralities of the clergy, and threatened to withdraw from the church those ample revenues which their pious ancestors had bestowed since they were so much abused. But their application for redress of church grievances, was made to a wrong person; for the Pope very coldly replied, that he did not suppose the clergy of England were either more ignorant or immoral, than they had been in former ages; and that their threat to withdraw any of the revenues of the church was vain, for whatever was once dedicated to the service of God was irrevocable.*

The Archbishop being supported by the Pope, held another council at Lambeth, A. D. 1261, in which the constitutions of Merton were not only confirmed, but several others added, of the most objectionable nature. By one of these canons, every Bishop is commanded to have two prisons in his diocese, for the confinement of clerks convicted of capital crimes; "for," says the canon, "if any clerk be so incorrigibly wicked, that he must have suffered capital punishment if he had been a layman, we

* Wilkin, council. t. i. p. 736--740. Ext. Henry vol. 8. p. 14.

“adjudge such an one to perpetual imprisonment.”*

Though the nation was suffering under the effects of a civil war between the King and his barons, the Pope continued to drain England of its money, for the present he had made to Prince Edmund, of the crown of Sicily; and in a few years received about nine hundred and fifty thousand marks; a sum equal in value to twelve millions of our money at this day!

As soon as the King had recovered his authority, by the victory over the revolted barons at Evesham, the Pope sent his legate Othobon into England, to congratulate Henry on that happy event; and on seeing how the affairs of the court stood, he very charitably excommunicated the late Earl of Leicester, and all his party whether dead or alive. Othobon held a national council in London, A. D. 1268, when a number of canons were made, the same in substance with those made at a council in London, A. D. 1237, called the constitutions of Otho, several of which are still in force, and form a part of the canon law of the church of England. This council passed some severe canons against pluralities, commendams, non-residence, and the clergy's accepting

* Johnson's Can. ann. 1261.

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sub-prior ; but the pope refused to confirm his election, and by his own power appointed Robert Kilwarby, a black friar to be Archbishop. King Edward was still in the Holy Land, and the regents not willing to risk a rupture with the Pope in the absence of their prince, submitted to this nomination ; but that the rights of the crown might not suffer through their silence, they made a solemn protest against this act of the Pope, as an encroachment on the royal prerogative, and sent it to Barnerd, the King's resident at the court of Rome, who presented it to the Pope in the name of his master. The monks of Canterbury too, in order to preserve their own rights, proceeded to an election, and made choice of Kilwarby. From the above it appears, that though these usurpations of the Pope were frequently submitted to, neither the Kings nor clergy of England, ever lost sight of their own undoubted rights.

A general council was called at Lyons by Gregory X, A. D. 1274, the professed object of which was, the reformation of the discipline of the church, and the relief of the Holy Land. For this last purpose, a tax was imposed upon the clergy, of a tenth of their revenues for six years, and was collected in all the countries of Christendom. The only person in the council that opposed

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a parliament at Westminster A. D. 1275, in which some wholesome laws were enacted, called the statutes of Westminster. One of these statutes states, that when a clerk was indicted in the King's court for any felony, he should not be delivered to his ordinary, until he had undergone an inquest and trial by lawful men.*

The passive submission of Kilwarthby Archbishop of Canterbury, to every thing proposed by the Pope at the council of Lyons, was rewarded with the purple by Gregory X, who created him cardinal of Oporto; and Peckham, whom the Pope had deprived of his preferment for opposing his measures; having made his peace with the court of Rome, his Holiness, after rejecting Robert Burnell bishop of Bath and Wells, who was elected by the monks of Canterbury; in virtue of his own authority, created him Archbishop of Canterbury, in which capacity he returned to England, and was peaceably received by King Edward, who had no wish to engage in an open quarrel with the court of Rome.

A provincial council was held by Peckham at Reading in August A. D. 1279, when the constitutions of Othobon were confirmed, and several new canons were made,—

* Coke's Inst. part ii. p. 156.

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England to pay him a tenth of their revenues, "notwithstanding any former privileges, indulgences, or grants, or any objections which could be devised." This Pope oppressed the English beyond any of his predecessors, by his nefarious means of drawing money to Rome. He absolved the King from his vow of going to the Holy Land, commuted the service, and transferred the expedition to assist him in taking possession of the kingdom of Sicily for his son Edmund; which in the plenitude of his power, the Pope had sold to King Henry for one hundred and thirty-five thousand five hundred and forty marks. As the Pope knew that the King had not this money at command, and that the coffers of the clergy were more accessible than those of the laity, he caused a number of obligatory notes to be drawn up, whereby each Bishop and abbot acknowledged on behalf of his church or convent, having received of some Italian merchant, the sum of five, six, or seven hundred marks, and thereby bound himself to pay it at such a time. The nuncio assembled the Bishops, and informed them that their sovereign lord the Pope, required each of them to sign one of those notes, on pain of excommunication.

This demand surprised the Bishops, some of whom declared aloud, that they would lose their lives before they would submit to such tyranny. The nuncio complained of the bishops to the King, who told the bishop of London that he should soon feel the effects of both his and the Pope's displeasure. The bishop courageously replied, he knew that the King and the Pope were more powerful than himself, but if they removed his mitre, he would put a helmet in its place. But this did not prevent the nuncio from urging a compliance, alleging, that as all the churches belonged to their sovereign lord the Pope, he could dispose of their incomes as he pleased. The bishops were indignant at hearing this, and unanimously declared, that sooner than submit to such an imposition, they would suffer death, as their cause was more meritorious than that in which Becket suffered martyrdom. The nuncio perceiving that he had no chance of succeeding by violent measures, returned to Rome to acquaint his Holiness with the conduct of the bishops. The clergy sent the dean of St. Paul's to Rome, to state their reasons for refusing, but all the redress he could obtain was, that what the Pope had laid upon them to pay at once, he allowed them to pay by instalments.

Archbishop Boniface carried the prerogatives of the church to as great a height as any of his predecessors, as appears from the canons of a council that he held at Merton, in Surrey, A. D. 1258. Several of these canons are a transcript of the ecclesiastical liberties, for which Becket contended even unto death. The first forbids all orders of the clergy to appear before civil courts, to answer for any part of their conduct which has any relation to church affairs; and threatens the judges, and even the King himself, with the highest censures of the church, if they insist on their appearance. The fifth forbids laymen to imprison clergymen. In the sixth the church claims a right of judging concerning contracts between a clergyman and a layman. The seventh asserts the right of the church to judge and punish the Jews. The eighth provides for the perfect security of criminals, who take sanctuary in churches. The two last provide for the church, peaceably to enjoy all pious legacies and donations.* The visible tendency of those canons, was to emancipate the church and clergy from all civil authority, and to revit the yoke of ecclesiastical tyranny still faster round the necks of the laity. The laity looked at these encroachments made on their liberties with

* See Spelman and Johnson's councils.

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to be their primate, and was approved by the King. On going to Rome to receive his pall, the Pope was so pleased with him, that he offered to give him a cardinal's cap, and retain him at Rome, but the offered honour was declined by the primate. The episcopal reign of this primate, was rendered very unpleasant by a number of painful circumstances ; and it is more than probable, that had Robert foreseen the thorns which were planted in the mitre, he would not have refused a cardinal's cap.

The war in which King Edward was engaged having exhausted his funds, he made such frequent demands upon the clergy, that they considered them grievous encroachments on the immunities of the church. In the year 1294, while the Archbishop was at Rome, the King seized all the money which had been collected for the holy war, and was deposited in several monasteries, and applied it to his own use.* Soon after this, the King issued out his writ to all the bishops of England to call the clergy of their different dioceses together at Westminster. In this national assembly, which was the first to which the King ever summoned the inferior clergy, he demanded of them one half of all their revenues both

* T. Wykes, p. 126.

temporal and spiritual for one year. This demand was not very cheerfully complied with; for they sought an audience of the King, in order to prevail on him to abate something in his demands. The clergy appointed William Montford, Dean of St. Paul's, to plead their cause, who soon after he had commenced his speech, was seized with such violent agitation of spirits, that he sunk to the ground, and expired on the spot. After this fatal accident, the clergy returned to the monk's hall at Westminster, to consult on their future proceedings, when they were interrupted by the entrance of Sir J. Havering, whose message from the King, was delivered in the following laconic speech: "Reverend fathers, if any of you dare to contradict the King's demand in this business, let him stand forth and discover his person, that he may take his trial as a disturber of the public peace." The fierce and manacng air in which this speech was delivered, convinced the clergy that resistance was vain, and they immediately yielded to the King's demand.

Whilst the clergy were smarting under the tax-rod of a half-year's revenue, they began to prepare for a more successful resistance. Boniface VIII, who was then in the papal chair, was as zealous a champion

for the power, wealth and immunities of the clergy, as ever wore the triple crown. The Archbishop laid their grievances before him, and implored his protection; in return he sent him his bull, forbidding all princes to levy any taxes on the clergy without permission granted by the holy see; and enjoining the clergy not to pay any such taxes, threatening both princes and clergy, with the dreadful sentence of excommunication in case of disobedience.*

The Archbishop being armed with this powerful instrument from Rome, held a consultation with his suffragans, to determine upon the most effectual way of using it. They were soon relieved from their doubtful debates, by the King calling a parliament to meet at St. Edmundsbury, on November 3rd, A. D. 1296, in which he demanded from the clergy a fifth of all their movables. To this demand, the clergy made a positive refusal founded upon the Pope's bull, which till then was kept secret, but was now produced by the Archbishop.† The King was greatly offended at this refusal, but allowed them to reconsider the matter till the meeting of next parliament. Upon this the Archbishop ordered the Pope's bull

* Vide Rymer, vol. ii, p. 706. Heming, vol. i, p. 104. † Ibid, p. 107.

to be published in all the cathedral churches of his province ; and the bishops issued out their injunctions to the collectors of the aids they had before granted, forbidding them to proceed any further in collecting those subsidies, and then revoked all their commissions for that purpose, as void, and of no effect.

The King summoned another parliament which met in London January 15th, A. D. 1297, when the King renewed his demand upon the clergy, who still persisted in their refusal. The Archbishop and clergy retired to St. Paul's, and drew up a letter which they sent to the King, stating the grounds of their objection. The King considered this letter as a declaration of war on the part of the clergy, and prepared to meet it with a determination to carry his point. He called another parliament to meet at Salisbury, where, with his barons, he passed an act to confiscate all the goods of the clergy, and throw the whole body of them out of the protection of the laws, since they would contribute nothing to the support of his government. At the same time he sent writs to all the sheriffs in England, commanding them to receive all the lay fees of the clergy, as well regular as secular, together with their goods and chattels, and keep them in

their possession, until they received further orders from him.

These prompt measures of his Majesty, opened the flood-gates which brought in a torrent of abuses, injuries, and distresses on the clergy : to oppose which, they passed an order for publishing a sentence of excommunication against all who laid hands on the goods of the clergy, without their consent.† This sentence, every bishop was himself to publish in his cathedral church, and the clergy in all the other churches throughout the kingdom. The whole body of the clergy being put out of the protection of the law, the excommunications were either not read, or at least, not regarded.—The Archbishop sent a solemn mandate to all the bishops of his province, dated July 6th, 1298, commanding them, by virtue of their canonical obedience, 1. To cause the sentence of excommunication to be published in every church in each of their dioceses, against all who seized the goods of ecclesiastical men, according to the decree of the synod of London. 2. To cause the same sentence to be published twice a year, against all infringers of the great charter, and the charter of forests, and to cause the said to be publicly read at the same time to the people. 3.

† Johnson's Canons, an. 1298.

To cause the sentence of the greater excommunication to be published in every church in each of their dioceses every Lord's day, and every festival, against all who should be guilty of beating or imprisoning clergymen. All these excommunications were to be pronounced with the greatest possible solemnity; with bells tolling and candles lighted, that it may cause the greater dread; "for laymen" (says the primate) have greater regard "to this solemnity, than to the effect of such a sentence."*

The contest was carried on by both sides, under the influence of strongly excited feelings, which produced much oppression.—Whilst these tumults were agitating the whole nation, the primate waited upon the King at Salisbury, where he was admitted to a private audience, with liberty to lay before his Majesty all he had to say on the subject in dispute. The two subjects on which the primate dilated at great length were, the liberties of the church, and the authority of the Pope, which was heard by his Majesty without interruption. The Archbishop having finished his speech, his Majesty told him, that if the Pope himself had temporal possessions here, the King had a lawful right to take of them for the de-

† Spelman Con. vol. ii, p. 428. Extr. Dr. Henry, vol. viii, p. 29.

rence of his realm and the church of England,—that, as the clergy in common with the laity enjoyed the protection of the government, it was only reasonable they should contribute to its expenses. The King declared that he was so satisfied in his own conscience of the lawfulness of his demand, when the support of his government required it, that he was ready to die in its defence. The primate replied, that in his opinion, the necessity of the case would not justify him in acting contrary to the Pope's constitution, by giving him any thing. His grace implored his majesty to suspend those rigorous measures against the clergy, and he would call a synod to consider the subject, to which the King might send some of his council. At this convocation, it was agreed on the part of the King, that the clergy should not grant an aid, but pay him a fine for their contumacy; and that a fifth of their revenues should be deposited in a privileged place, not to be touched by the King's officers but when necessary in defence of the realm.

To this proposition all agreed but the Archbishop, who still pleaded the Pope's injunction; on which the King commanded a seizure to be made of all his temporalities. This had the desired effect; the primate,

without any reference to either conscience or the Pope's consent, agreed to give the King a fourth part of his goods, on which he was again received into favour. Thus did Edward, by wise and prompt measures, silence the selfish and covetous claims of the Pope and clergy, when their power was at the highest. Whilst Edward displayed a firmness in opposing papal usurpations that well became an English monarch, we regret to find him seeking help from that corrupt court for such base purposes. His triumph over the clergy encouraged him to try to overcome the barons also. The two charters he had signed were galling yokes to a monarch that wished to reign absolute. Edward applied to Pope Clement V. for a bull to absolve him from the oath he had taken to confirm them. This application was accompanied with a rich service of gold plate, in which the infallible pontiff found a weighty reason for granting the King absolution; and as the bishops were bound by act of Parliament, to publish an excommunication against those who broke the charters, the Pope pronounced such sentences to be all void and of none effect.

The last public act of Archbishop Winchelsey was a provincial synod which he held at Merton A.D. 1305. In this synod several

canons were made ; some of them not very important. The fourth contains a curious and distinct detail of the several books, vestments, and utensils, which at that period were used in the celebration of divine worship, with the other furniture and ornaments of the churches. The design of the canon was to put an end to all disputes between the rectors and their parishioners, by determining what part each of them was to provide and keep in repair.

By this constitution the parishioners were to provide the following books for the use of the church :—1. A Legend or Lectionary, a book containing all the lessons out of scripture and other books, which were to be read throughout the year. 2. An Antiphonar, a book containing all the invitatories, responses, verses, collects, and every thing that was said or sung in the quire, except the lessons :—3. A Grail ; a book containing the tracts, sequences, hallelujahs, the creed, offertory, trisagium, &c. and the office for sprinkling holy water, and all that was to be sung at high mass :—4. A psalter :—5. A troper, which contained only the sequences which were not in the grail :—6. The ordinal, a book, containing directions for the right method of performing all the divine offices ; this book was sometimes called the pie or

portuis :—7. A missal or mass-book :—8. A manuel, a book containing the offices of baptism, and the other sacraments, except the mass, with the service used at a procession. It must have been a great expense to parishes to provide all these books before the invention of printing, when the common price of a mass-book was five marks, equal to the yearly stipend of some vicars at that time. Besides these books the parishioners were to provide the following vestments, namely, 1. The principal vestment, or best cope, to be used on the greater festivals :—2. A chesible, being the garment worn by the priest next under the cope, and which was sometimes called the planet :—3. A dalmatic, the garment used by the deacon :—4. A tunic, for the sub-deacon :—5. A choral cope, for common use, with its appendages, namely, the alb, amyt, stole maniple, and girdle :—6. Three surplices, and one rochet or surplice without sleeves :—7. A frontal or covering for the great altar, and three or four towels. The parishioners were further obliged to provide the following sacred utensils :—1. A chalice or cup for the wine, with a patin or cover, both of silver :—2. A pyx or box for the body of Christ, of ivory or silver :—3. A censer :—4. A cross for processions, and another cross for the dead, to

be used in the burial office: 5. A baptismal font, with lock and key:—6. A vessel for the holy water:—7. A great candlestick for the taper at Easter:—8. A lanthorn and hand-bell, to be carried before the body of Christ in the visitation of the sick:—9. An osculatory, or board with the picture of Christ or the Virgin Mary painted on it, which the priest kissed immediately after consecrating the host, and then handed about for the congregation to kiss:—10. All the images in the church, and the chief image in the chancel. The parishioners were obliged also to build and keep in repair the body of the church, the glass windows, and to furnish it with bells and several other things. All this must have been attended with great expense to the parish, as several of the articles were costly, both in their materials and workmanship. The rectors were obliged to keep the chancel, with its desks, &c. in repair.*

Though a former grievance between the King and the primate was professedly healed, yet they each watched the other with a jealous eye, ready to take advantage of the first opportunity. The Pope having absolved Edward from his oath by which he had con-

* Spelman Con. vol. ii, p. 431. Johnson's Canons, A.D. 1305. Extr. Henry, vol. viii, p. 29—31.

firmed the great charters, he made many encroachments on the rights and privileges of the barons. Whilst the King was on the continent, prosecuting a war with France, the primate joined some of the nobility in a conspiracy to depose the King, imprison him for life, and transfer the crown to his son Edward prince of Wales. The King had long been greatly dissatisfied with the high tone, in which the primate had defended the immunities of the clergy, but when he found him engaged with the disaffected barons, he became quite enraged, and determined to make him feel the weight of his resentment. The earl marshal was the first that was accused; he confessed his guilt, implored the King's mercy and was fined.—The King sent for the Archbishop, and charged him with high treason, as being at the head of the malecontents; when either his conscience or courage failed him, for without attempting a defence, he fell at the King's feet and with tears implored his pardon. The King expostulated with him on different parts of his conduct, which so overcame the primate, that he begged his Majesty's blessing. The King told him he forgot his character; that it was more proper for the King to receive a blessing from his grace, than to give his to an Archbishop.

The King complained of the Archbishop to the Pope, but Boniface VIII, the protector of the primate being dead, and Clement V. who was born in Edward's continental dominions, being much disposed to favour his native sovereign; his Holiness suspended the Archbishop from the execution of his office, deprived him of the temporalities of his see, and cited him to appear at Rome.* The primate delayed going to Rome until he was outlawed, and when he arrived, the Pope treated him with such indifference, that he continued in indigence and disgrace, till after the King's death, when he was recalled by Edward II. and restored to his dignities and possessions.

The last parliament held by Edward I. met at Carlisle January 21st, A. D. 1307. In this parliament the King endeavoured to correct a number of abuses in the church of England; which had become so notorious that they could no longer be supported.—The superiors of several religious orders on the continent, frequently came into England on pretence of visiting the monasteries of their order, from whence they extorted great sums of money which they carried out of the Kingdom. To prevent this practice, an act

* W. Thorn, col. 2003. Dr. Warner, vol. i. p. 484. Dr. Henry, vol. viii. p. 32.

was passed in this parliament, prohibiting the exportation of the goods of religious houses on any pretence whatever.

The Pope had lately invented a new method of raising money, and getting the disposal of all ecclesiastical benefices and preferments. This was by giving reversionary grants of benefices before they became vacant; by which he deprived the legal patrons of their right of presentation. These grants were called provisions, because thereby successors were provided to incumbents while they were yet living. The Pope had laid claim to the first-fruits of all vacant benefices for three years, and had empowered his nuncio to collect them, which formerly belonged to the King. In order to prevent the kingdom from being thus drained of its money, the parliament drew up the following list of grievances which they sent to the Pope, accompanied with a very spirited letter.—The list consisted of seven articles, which were as follows :

1. The extravagant number of provisions granted by the Pope, of the best spiritual preferments, to Italians, or other foreigners, and non-residents, to the great prejudice of the founders, benefactors, and their successors, and to such as had the right of advowson, and the gifts of such preferments.

2. The rents and revenues of religious houses which the Pope intended to apply to the use of divers cardinals.

3. Concerning first-fruits of vacant benefices reserved to the Pope, a thing never heard of before ; concerning the collecting of which he had lately issued forth divers hard and severe orders, much prejudicial to the King, kingdom, and the whole English church.

4. About Peter-pence ; that it was not taken according to the first grant, but exacted to treble the value.

5. Concerning legacies given to pious uses ; that they were wickedly demanded, and exacted by the authority of the apostolic see, and converted to other uses than the testator or donor intended.

6. Concerning debts ; that creditors went to the Pope's clerks, and offered them half the debt, more or less, to get the rest : who presently caused the debtors to be summoned or distrained, to answer before them.

7. Concerning indistinct legacies ; though approved by the civil or common law, yet the Pope's clerks impiously appropriated them to themselves, contrary to the design of the deceased.*

* Ryley's Placit. Parl. p. 380. Extr. Dr. Henry, vol. viii. p. 34.

William Testa, the Pope's nuncio, was brought before this parliament, and was severely reprimanded for these new acts of extortion, and commanded to desist from them; and his inferior agents were ordered to be prosecuted with the utmost severity. This noble conduct in the English parliament, gave a momentary check to the unjust proceeding of the court of Rome; but brought no effectual remedy, as will appear in the subsequent part of these Sketches.

CHAPTER XIX.

Remarks on the Pope's conduct.—His bull to the King of France.—Death of King Edward I.—Curses in the general excommunication.—Order of knights templar dissolved.—Death & character of Archbishop Winchelsey.—The Pope nullifies the election of Cobham, and appoints Reynolds to be primate.—Statute of articuli cleri.—The Pope's arbitrary conduct in appointing bishops.—Bishop Orilton convicted of treason, but the Archbishops would not let him be condemned.—Edward II compelled to resign his crown to his son, and was soon after murdered.—Bishop of Exeter murdered.—Death of Archbishop Reynolds.—Succeeded by Mepham.—The Pope's agent sentenced the primate to pay a large sum to the monks, and dying before he had paid it, they seized his corps.—Stratford elected primate.—His quarrel with the King.—The King and parliament complain of the encroachments of the Pope.—Death and character of the primate.—Three Archbishops of Caunterbury die in one year—Islop elected primate by the Pope.—Contention between the two Archbishops about carrying their crosses.—Remonstrance against the clergy for abuse of privileges.—Constitutions published by the primate.—The statute of provisions.—The Pope's claim to a tribute rejected.—Tyranny of the clergy over the laity.—Seven Bishops died one year of the pestilence.—Deaths of Archbishop Islop, and his successor Langham.

If we were called upon to fix the time when the tide of papal pride and avarice

was at its height, we could not point to a more proper period than the present. The infallible pontiffs had recourse to every art they could devise to drain this unhappy kingdom of its treasure, and fleece both the clergy and laity. The amount of monies paid to the court of Rome for appeals and law suits,—by priests to purchase church preferments,—by bishops for the confirmation of their elections, and to obtain consecration;—by the primates for their palls,—by the legates and nuncios, raised on various pretences;—by the first-fruits of benefices,—by Peter-pence,—by Italians who possessed many of the richest livings in England, but resided abroad, would excite our astonishment and inflame our indignation.

Nor was the pride and hypocrisy of the Popes less conspicuous. Whilst the Popes styled themselves *the servants of the servants of the Lord*, they assumed to be the universal monarchs of the Christian world, both in temporals and spirituals, and treated all the sovereigns of Europe as their vassals and subjects. In confirmation of the above assertion, we shall give an extract from a bull sent by Pope Boniface VIII. to Philip the Fair, King of France, dated December 5th, A.D. 1301: “Boniface the bishop, a servant
X 11 10V
“of the servants of God, to Philip King of

“France. Fear God and keep his commandments. We will you to know, that you are subject to us, both in spirituals and temporals. You have no right to bestow benefices and prebends, &c. &c. We declare them heretics who believe the contrary.”* It would be difficult to find a finer specimen of the insolent humility of a Roman pontiff, than the contents of the above bull, in which he declared, “that God had established the Pope supreme sovereign over all kings and kingdoms, to pluck up, to destroy, to scatter, or to build.”

This valiant monarch Edward I. made several formidable stands against papal usurpations; but he laboured under many disadvantages. When on his way to Scotland he was taken ill of a dysentery, and said, he knew his sickness would be unto death. He ordered his son Edward to be sent for, to whom he recommended three things:—1. To prosecute the war with Scotland, until he had entirely subdued that nation. 2. To send his heart to the Holy Land, accompanied with one hundred and forty knights, and their retinues, for whose support he had provided the sum of thirty-two thousand pounds sterling, which he charged him, on pain of eternal damnation

* Du Pin, vol. 12, p. 5. Henry, v. viii., p. 39.

not to spend for any other purpose : and 3. Never to re-call Gaveston, whom the King with the advice of his parliament, had banished as a corrupter of the prince's morals. After giving his son this solemn charge, he ordered himself to be carried on towards Scotland, that he might die in a country that he had thrice conquered. But his disease became so violent, that he could get no further than Burgh-upon-Sands, a village in the county of Cumberland, where he departed this life July 7th, A.D. 1307, to whose memory a handsome pillar has been erected. Edward I. was certainly a great king, to whom posterity is indebted for many excellent statutes, which greatly improved the constitution. But, that he was not free from the arbitrary spirit of the times is clear, from the blemish he has made in his character, by procuring the Pope's absolution from his oath to observe the charters.

The minds of the different orders in the church, appear to have been so completely absorbed in the pursuit of power and wealth, that there were but few innovations in the doctrines of the church of England in this period ; but there were several changes in the worship and discipline of the church. The number of festivals was considerably

increased ; bells were tolled at the elevation of the host, to engage the adoration of those who were not at the church. Sometimes, a cup of wine was given to the laity when they partook of the eucharist, though it was declared to be no part of the sacrament ; at other times they had to wash their wafers down with the water in which the priest had washed his fingers.*

About this time was introduced *general excommunications*, by which all who were guilty of certain crimes, though known only to God and their own consciences, were declared to be excommunicated. These excommunications, were at first chiefly denounced against such as injured the clergy, by detaining their tithes, defrauding them of their dues, or stealing any thing belonging to the church. They were to be published before the whole congregation in the mother tongue, by every parish priest in his holy vestments, with bells tolling and candles lighted, on Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, and Allhallow's-day.†

That these excommunications might produce the greater effect on tender consciences, and the more timorous and fearful, they contained the most horriſying infernal curses

* Spelman Conc. t. 2, p. 330. Johnson's Can. A.D. 1236—21

† Spelman Con. v. ii. p. 181.

that could be devised : “ Let them be accursed eating and drinking ; walking and sitting ; speaking and holding their peace ; waking and sleeping ; rowing and riding ; laughing and weeping ; in house and in field ; on water and on land ; in all places. Cursed be their head and their thoughts ; their eyes and their ears ; their tongues and their lips ; their teeth and their throats ; their shoulders and their breasts ; their feet and their legs ; their thighs and their inwards. Let them remain accursed, from the bottom of the foot to the crown of the head, unless they bethink themselves and come to satisfaction. And just as this candle is deprived of its light, so let them be deprived of their souls in hell.”*

Such was the language of holy mother church to her children, if they were but suspected of having deprived the priest of any part of his dues.

One of the first acts of Edward II. after he ascended the throne, was to recall Robert Winchelsey Archbishop of Canterbury, who had been several years in exile. But the unfortunate primate, soon lost the favour of the young King, by opposing him when he was wanting to break through the canons of several councils against pluralities and non-

* Wanly's Catalogue.

residence, in favour of his chaplains, and such clergymen as officiated at court, or were entrusted with secular employments.

A violent persecution of the knights-templars broke out in France, under the direction of their most powerful enemy Philip the Fair, King of France, which affected all the nations in Europe for several years. This order, at its institution in 1118, consisted only of nine knights, who had their residence in a house near the temple, from which they derived the name of knights-templars, and engaged in the protection of the Christian pilgrims who visited Jerusalem. Many of these pilgrims being princes, prelates, barons, and persons of great wealth, they were very liberal to their protectors; and by degrees the knights-templars became both numerous and opulent, having valuable estates in every Christian country. Two knights, who were punished for their crimes, charged the whole order with the most detestable crimes. They affirmed particularly—1. That every knight, at his admission into the order, was obliged to abjure Jesus Christ, to spit upon the crucifix, and to trample it under his feet. 2. That they discharged him from all intercourse with women; but allowed him to commit the sin of Sodom. 3. That they compelled him to worship a wooden head,

with a long beard, which was adored by the whole order, in their general assemblies. This strange discovery afforded a fair pretext for Philip, King of France, to command all the templars in his dominions to be seized the same day, October 5th, 1307, and cast into prison.

In virtue of a bull from Pope Clement V., Robert Winchelsey Archbishop of Canterbury, convened a provincial synod, which was held in London, in November, 1309, to inquire into the affairs of the knights-templars in England. In this synod, a mass of evidence was brought against the templars by the bishop of London, and other commissioners appointed by the Pope. The evidence produced gave rise to a lengthened debate, at the close of which, the following sentence was pronounced : “ That the templars in London should be separated from one another, and examined again concerning the crimes objected to them, and that new interrogatories should be put to them, that if possible some truth might be extracted from their own confessions ; that the same should be done to the templars confined at Lincoln ; that if by these separations and interrogations, they confess nothing more than they have done before, they should then be put to the rack, but

“without mutilation, or the too violent effusion of blood. That the bishops of London and Chester, with the other commissioners, should acquaint the Archbishop when this was done, that he might reassemble the synod.”*

The execution of this curious sentence occupied much time; for the synod was not reassembled till the feast of the exaltation of the holy cross, A.D. 1311. At that meeting, all the templars who had been seized and brought to London appeared before the synod, and publicly confessed, “That they had been accused of so many articles of heresy that they could not legally exculpate themselves; and therefore they prayed for the mercy of God and of the church; and were ready to receive and perform whatever penances should be enjoined them.” The templars having made this confession, the synod decreed, “That they should be separated from one another, and sent to the different monasteries of England to perform the penances which should be enjoined them, until the holy see, in a general council, should finally determine concerning their state and order.”†

To determine the fate of the templars, a general council, consisting of about three

333 233. • Wilkin Cod. t. 2, p. 314. † *Id. ibid.*

hundred Archbishops and Bishops, met at Vienne in Dauphiny, October 16th, A. D. 1311, but broke up without coming to any thing decisive on the subject; but another session of the council was held May 22nd, 1312, in which Pope Clement V, presided in person, when the final sentence against the templars was pronounced with great solemnity, dissolving the order, and bestowing all its riches on the knights-hospitallers. But the form of the sentence contains sufficient evidence of its injustice. In the bull of condemnation, the Pope declared, "That though it could not be done according to the usual rules and forms of Justice, yet he dissolved the order of the knights-templars by the plenitude of his power."* There is something mysterious connected with the dissolution of the order of the knights-templars, after having flourished nearly two centuries, and had attained a great degree of prosperity and wealth. That many of its members were dissolute characters is not improbable; but that an order of knights instituted for fighting in defence of christianity, should make the renouncing of Christ, with every mark of contempt, the first act in the ceremony of their admission, is altogether incredible.

* Du Pin, Cent. XIV. Ch. 2. Extr. Dr. Henry, vol. viii. p. 44, 45.

It will be very difficult to divest the mind of the idea, that when his Holiness acknowledged, that he could not break up the order by "the usual rules and forms of justice," but did it "by the plenitude of his power," that he calculated upon part of their immense treasures, finding their way into his own coffers.

The separation of the ecclesiastical from the civil jurisdiction, which was done by William the conqueror, gave rise to much contention about the limits of their different authorities. To determine this was often found a very difficult task, from the mixed nature of many causes. The ecclesiastical courts, made loud complaints against the civil courts for encroaching upon their prerogatives. They drew up a long list of grievances, which they presented to the King and parliament, praying for redress. Among many subjects of complaint is found the following: "When clergymen are apprehended on suspicion of a crime, by the civil officers, they are not immediately delivered up to their bishops upon demand, as of right they ought to be, but are long kept in prison, contrary to the liberties of the church and clergy." To this list of grievances, by the advice of his parliament, he returned very artful and evasive answers.*

* See Wilkin, *Con. t. 2, p. 314—323.* Henry, vol. viii, p. 47.

In stating their grievances to the Pope, the English clergy met with very different encouragement. The Pope directed a bull to the Archbishop of Canterbury, commanding the King to redress these grievances, on pain of involving himself and kingdom in "total destruction."

In this bull, his Holiness complains bitterly, "That clerks invested with the sacerdotal character, and shining with the splendour of pontifical dignity, were tried by laymen, condemned, and hanged, when found guilty of murder or robbery, to the great provocation of the supreme King, who hath forbidden the secular power to touch his anointed." In such an awful manner did the pretended vicar of Christ on earth, pervert and misapply the word of God!

The death of Robert Winchelsey took place on May 11th, A. D. 1313, in the twentieth year of his primacy. When chancellor of the university of Oxford, he acquired the reputation of a pious divine, excellent grammarian and philosopher; an affecting and popular preacher. The bishop of London hearing such an excellent character of him, gave him the archdeaconry of Essex, and a prebend at St. Paul's. Had his promotion rose no higher, he might have left the world with an unblemished character.

But his elevation to the primacy, instead of adding a lustre, drew a shade over his reputation. The high notions which he entertained of the immunities of the clergy, involved him in many troubles, with King Edward I; but his perfidious conduct in being at the head of a conspiracy against that prince, for which he was banished and suspended with marked ignomy, has soiled his memory with a blot. His charities are said to have been very great. He supported a number of young men of talent at the university, whose parents were not in circumstances to provide for them. He relieved above three thousand poor twice a week at his own house, beside assisting a number who were reduced in their circumstances, but who through modesty would not make known their wants. He was very moderate in his desires, temperate in his enjoyments, and exemplary in every part of his life; so that we cannot but regret, that a man in his high station, with so many good qualities, should by any act of his life have left a stain upon his memory. After a short vacancy, the convent unanimously elected Thomas Cobham dean of Salisbury, who was commonly called the good clergyman, to be the primate. But the Pope, at the request of the King, nullified the election, and by his

own authority, translated Walter Reynolds bishop of Worcester, to the see of Canterbury, October 1st, A.D. 1313.*

Reynolds, had learnt how to obtain favour in the corrupt court of Pope Clement V.; who not only raised him to the primacy, but by his bulls granted him several extraordinary powers. By one of these bulls, he authorized him to make a provincial visitation for the three ensuing years, and to suspend the jurisdiction of his suffragans for that time; by another, he empowered him to absolve one hundred clergy, who had been excommunicated for certain crimes;—to bestow holy orders on one hundred bastards;—to allow twelve clerks under age, to hold benefices with cure of souls;—to absolve a number of laymen who had laid violent hands on the clergy, and who without this privilege could only be absolved by the Pope himself;—to dispense with the canons of the church against pluralities, in favour of forty clergymen;—to relax all who heard him preach or say mass, from one hundred days' penances. Thus did the Popes of those times, not only break through all the laws of the church themselves, but even delegate this dispensing power to an English prelate. When we consider how tenacious the court

* *Anglia Sacra*, t. 1, p. 11—17.

of Rome was for its sovereign power, we believe the primate might have said as an ancient Roman citizen did, *with a great sum obtained I this privilege.*

The Archbishop summoned a provincial council, which met in London A.D. 1314, or 1315. The King was then at York, from whence he sent a pressing letter to the primate, and also one to each of the bishops and chief abbots of the province, urging them to procure him an aid of the clergy to enable him to prosecute the war with Scotland. The clergy very willingly granted him a tenth, one-half to be paid in this, and the other half the following year. Encouraged by the readiness with which his request was granted in the province of Canterbury, he made a similar request to the province of York, which was granted on condition, of the King granting them a charter to defend the church from the encroachments of the temporal courts. In the following year, 1316, the King granted the remarkable statute called *articuli cleri*, which claims on behalf of the clergy, the most exorbitant exemptions from civil authority. We may judge of the rest from what is contained in the last chapter,—that when clerks confess before temporal judges their heinous offences, as theft, robbery, and murder, they

VOL II. Y

cannot be judged or condemned by these temporal judges upon their own confession, without violating the privilege of the church; and that the privilege of the church being demanded by the ordinary in due form, shall not be denied.*

The encroachments made by the Pope, on the freedom of elections to vacant bishopricks, was most notorious. In 1317, he nullified the election of the chapter of Durham, and by his own apostolic authority, appointed Lewis Beaumont, of the house of France, to that see. In the following year the see of Winchester became vacant, when in opposition to the election of the convent, and the recommendation of the King, he appointed his legate, R. Asser, then in England, to that bishoprick. The primate considered this act, such a violent outrage against the rights of the crown and church of England, that he refused to consecrate the legate; but the bishop of London having no such scruples, performed the ceremony. The see of Hereford became vacant about the same time, when the Pope, in opposition to the entreaties of the King, promoted Adam Orleton to that dignity.

Orleton, was a factious and martial prelate, who knowing that the court had been

* Coke's Institut. part 2, p. 601, &c.

unfavourable to his promotion, he made common cause with the rebellious barons against the King, and was found in arms when the rebels were defeated at Boroughbridge, in the west-riding of Yorkshire, in 1321. When the parliament met at Westminster, A. D. 1324, Orleton was charged before the House of Peers with high treason. When the articles of his indictment were read, he pleaded his privilege as a priest, not to be tried by laymen, in which plea, he was supported by the other bishops. The King determined to bring him to a trial for the same crime in the court of King's bench, but the three Archbishops of Canterbury, York, and Dublin, came into court with their crosses born before them, and carried him away in triumph.* But Orleton was no sooner freed from this affair, than with the bishop of Lincoln, they joined the Queen and Mortimer, in accomplishing the destruction of his unhappy sovereign. The Queen, aided by these prelates and the disaffected barons, caused the King to be deposed for male administration, and compelled him to resign his crown to his eldest son Edward. The Archbishop of Canterbury published the resignation in Westminster hall, amidst the loud acclamations of the common people,

* T. Walsing. Hist. Aug. p. 115.

on which the learned primate declaimed, "the voice of the people is the voice of God," and closed his harangue by exhorting the people to pray for God's blessing upon the young prince.

Whilst the traitorous bishop of Hereford was allowed to pass with impunity, the brave, learned, and loyal Walter Stapleton, bishop of Exeter, experienced a very different fate. The citizens of London having warmly espoused the cause of the Queen and Mortimer against the King, did not pay such regard to the privileges of the clergy, as was allowed them by the laws and the courts of justice: for having seized the bishop of Exeter, whom they knew to be true to his King, they stripped him naked, led him through the streets, branding him with indignities, and at last cut off his head in Cheapside.*

There is something so very diabolical, connected with the tragical end of King Edward II., that we cannot refrain giving a short account of it. The parliament having voted the crown to his son, deputed the prelates to acquaint the King with their decision. These good prelates, instead of sympathizing with the unhappy monarch, assailed him with sarcastic insults. They told

* T. Walsing. Hist. Ang. p. 124.

him, that they had only deprived him of his crown, that he might live more happy, being eased of the trouble of governing. They added further, that if he refused to deliver up his crown to his son, upon this vote of parliament, that the whole nation would renounce their allegiance to him; and having said this, they left him. When the commissioners came to receive his resignation, he came out of his room in a mourning dress, with a countenance that bespoke much inward grief; and at the sight of those who had deprived him of his crown, he fell into a swoon. Having recovered himself, he frankly confessed that his sinful conduct was the cause of his trouble, and submitted to all that was required. He thanked them for the regard they had shown to his son, and delivered up his crown and sceptre into the hands of the commissioners.

Thus ended the reign, and in a few months after, the life of Edward II., in the forty-third year of his age, under circumstances too horrible to be related. The Queen, the bishop of Hereford, and the other conspirators, became alarmed at the sympathy of the public for their injured prince, and considered themselves not safe whilst he was alive, and therefore devised means to accomplish his death. The bishop sent a let-

ter written in latin, to the King's keepers, with this ambiguous sentence in it: "*Edwardum occidere nolite timere bonum est,*" which might be read either as a warrant to assassinate Edward, or as a dissuasive from it. But his keepers interpreted the sentence in its most natural sense, and doubtless, that which the bishop intended, and soon executed their commission under circumstances of such a barbarous nature, that we cannot give the particulars. The murderers met with a different reward from what they had expected, for they were forced to leave the country, and one of them was beheaded. The Queen was kept a close prisoner twenty-eight years in the castle of Rising in Norfolk; the Earl of March, whom she had taken to her bed before she got her husband deposed, was hanged at Tyburn; but the bishop of Hereford, who had a principal hand in the execrable murder of this unhappy prince, was permitted to go down to his grave in the common course of nature.*

The see of Exeter being left vacant by the murder of the loyal bishop Stapleton, the primate, in compliance with an order from the Queen, consecrated J. Berkly to that see, in opposition to a provision from Rome, by which his Holiness had reserved that

* Warner's Eccl. Hist., vol. i. p. 495.

bishoprick to himself. The Pope was so enraged at the Archbishop for his compliance with the court, that he wrote him a severe letter, in which he mixed his threatenings with so much tart satire, that Reynolds sunk under the displeasure of his Holiness, and died November 15th, A. D. 1327.

Soon after the death of Reynolds, the convent with the King's consent, elected Mepham for their Archbishop, and his application to the Pope for consecration, being accompanied with a munificent present, his Holiness confirmed him in the see. This primate had a long and arduous contest with the monks of St. Augustine at Canterbury, who pleaded a papal authority. In the course of this contest, some of the Archbishop's servants beat and wounded two of the monks, and a notary, who had come to summon their master to appear before Iche-rius de Concoret, canon of Salisbury, who had been commissioned by the Pope to examine this controversy. This insult was so highly resented by the Pope and his agent, that the primate had to swear on the gospels, that he had given no such orders to his servants;—that he execrated what they had done;—that he had dismissed them all from his service, and would never receive any of them into it again;—and was obliged to

have his own testimony corroborated by thirty witnesses. After Icherius had thus humbled the Archbishop, he pronounced a sentence against him, condemning him to pay a fine of £1241, to the convent for their expenses.* In this manner, says Dr. Henry, did the Popes of those times, and their meanest agents, trample upon the greatest prelates, when they presumed to dispute their most arbitrary mandates.

The Archbishop held a provincial council at Magfield in July A. D. 1332, in which was settled a rubrick of the principal festivals to be observed in the church of England, and how they were to be kept. In the same year he began a metropolitanical visitation, in the progress of which he visited the dioceses of Rochester, Chichester, Salisbury, Bath and Wells; but when on his way to Exeter, the bishop of that see, John Grandson put himself at the head of a body of men in arms, to prevent his entrance into Exeter. Had the Archbishop been left to pursue his own plan, it is probable the controversy had taken a different turn; but the King being made acquainted with the dispute, recalled his grace from his visitation and saved him from the dishonor of being driven back.

* Chr. W. Thorn. Col. 2039—2051. Henry, vol. viii, p. 51.

This treatment, together with the trouble occasioned him by the monks of Canterbury caught on a fever of which he died at Magd., October 12th, A. D. 1333, having held the episcopal chair five years and a few months. His body was for some time denied burial, until the abbot and monks of St. Augustine granted him their absolution; by which is probably meant, a discharge from the debt which he owed them, from the sum which Icherius sentenced him to pay their rent.*

On the death of Archbishop Mepham, the king recommended Stratford, bishop of Winchester, and lord Chancellor, to that effect. The interest Edward III. had at the court of Rome, procured the Pope's approbation of Stratford, and the monks not willing to wage war against both the King and the Pope, made a virtue of necessity and elected him Archbishop of Canterbury. The Pope out of compliment to the King of France, promoted Orleton to the bishoprick of Winchester, though King Edward pressed articles of high crimes and misdemeanours against him at the court of Rome. The new Archbishop entered upon his office under circumstances of peculiar honour, being at the same time both chan-

* Id. *ibid.*, col. 2066.

cellor and prime minister to the young King, he had the chief management of both the civil and ecclesiastical affairs of the kingdom. But the Archbishop did not long enjoy this high degree of royal favour. The primate having failed to procure a peace with France, an expedition was advised and provided for by parliament, for King Edward to invade that country, and prosecute his claim to the crown of France. The King left the sole administration of the kingdom with the Archbishop, when he went on the projected expedition; but the primate neglecting to furnish money to defray the expense of the war, Edward had to make a truce with the King of France, disband his army, and return home without effecting any thing, burdened under a load of debt.

The disappointment must have been very galling to such an active warlike prince as Edward, having to retreat with disgrace, when success was almost in sight. On the return of the King to England, he preferred a formal charge against the primate for neglect, in not sending the regular supplies for the expedition, and thereby bringing a blemish upon the public credit, and involving the kingdom in debt. He was immediately deprived of all his secular employments, and had to make a precipitate retreat from Lam-

beth, to prevent his person being seized, as several of his confidants were cast into prison. The King published a long manifesto against the primate, charging him with pride, ingratitude, negligence, treachery, and various other crimes. The primate published a long reply, in which he styled the royal manifesto a *defamatory libel*, and denied all the facts stated in it, in the most positive terms, and warned the King against the consequences of receiving informations against his ministers from interested and malicious people, who would not hesitate to embroil the nation in confusion. But the Archbishop did not stop here, at the close of a sermon he preached in the cathedral of Canterbury, he pronounced sentence of excommunication against all who disturbed the peace of church,—who offered violence to the persons or property of the clergy,—who broke in upon the liberties of the great charter,—who were guilty of giving false information against Archbishops or bishops, their spiritual fathers, the ambassadors of Christ, and pillars of the church.†

It is probable, that in this quarrel between the King and the primate, there was a little court policy acted upon, to turn the public attention from another subject. To support

† Anglia Sacra. tom. 1, p. 19—39.

the war with France, the people had been burdened with a heavy tax; and the expedition had not in any degree answered the expectations of the people, or corresponded with the expense. To prevent a backwardness on the part of the people to support the war, the failure of the other expedition must be ascribed to the fault of some one, and none so likely to bear the blame as the Archbishop, who had the sole direction of affairs at home. After a great deal of commotion had been excited about the Archbishop's trial, and articles of impeachment drawn up, the primate was introduced into the painted chamber where both houses of parliament were assembled, April 9th, A.D. 1341, when the primate fell upon his knees before the King, who was seated upon the throne, and implored his pardon and favour, which was immediately granted. That this was a manœuvre of the court appears plain, for at the next parliament held two years after, the King commanded "that the articles of impeachment drawn up against John Archbishop of Canterbury, to be brought into the house to be annulled, and declared insignificant: because the matter contained in them, is neither reasonable nor true."*

* Warner's Eccles. Hist. vol. i, p. 501.

The encroachments of the court of Rome on the privileges of the church of England were daily increasing, so that what was first granted as a favour, was now claimed as "an undeniable prerogative of the holy see." The King wrote a very strong letter of remonstrance to the Pope, against his encroachments on the rights of the crown, and of other patrons, by reservations and provisions, the evils of which he represented thus:—"By these provisions and reservations, the encouragements of religion were bestowed upon unqualified mercenary foreigners, who neither resided in the country, nor understood its language; by which means the ends of the priesthood were not answered, our own subjects are discouraged from prosecuting their studies, the treasures of the kingdom carried off by strangers, the jurisdiction of its courts baffled by constant appeals to foreign authority, and both the crown and private patrons were deprived of their unquestionable rights. These mischiefs are now become intolerable; and our subjects in parliament have earnestly requested us to put a stop to them by some speedy and effectual remedy.*

* T. Walsing, p. 161. Extr. Henry, vol. viii, p. 55.

The King soon found that Rome was the wrong place to apply to for a redress of these grievances, and therefore called a parliament, in which was enacted the statute against provisions, "That in case any person was convicted of bringing the like provisions into the kingdom in future, he was to be imprisoned till he had paid a fine and ransom to the King at his pleasure, and made satisfaction to the party injured."*

Whilst King Edward III. and his martial son the black prince, were pursuing military fame in the fields of France, and the more romantic wilds of Scotland, Archbishop Stratford closed his mortal career at Magfield, where he died on the vigil of St. Bartholomew, A.D. 1348. Stratford filled the chair of Canterbury nearly fourteen years, with credit to himself and profit to the nation. His situation was peculiarly trying, and exposed him to the animadversions of many, but he outlived most, if not all his enemies. Every one must give him credit for being sparing of the public money, when they are told, that he crossed the channel thirty-two times, and took several journeys into Scotland on public business, for all which, he never received more than three hundred pounds out of the Exchequer. His

* Warner, vol. i. p. 501.

fatherly tenderness towards the clergy, was only equalled by his charities to the relief of the poor and needy. He every day, with his own hand, relieved forty people with money, besides supporting a number of other charities. Of the accusations brought against him in parliament, he was honourably acquitted by the King, who pronounced them not true. Had he lived in a more liberal age, his character would have been handed down to posterity as a wise statesman, a disinterested patriot, and an excellent metropolitan.

The election of a new Archbishop revived the disputes between the crown, the monks, and the bishops of the province. These contentions proved fatal to the interest of the church, as all the parties appealed to Rome, which greatly increased the authority of that court, and gave a specious pretence for its most ambitious claims. On this occasion, the monks made choice of Thomas Bradwardin for their Archbishop. The King intended to raise John Ufford, dean of Lincoln, to the see of Canterbury; and notwithstanding his late remonstrance against papal provisions, he immediately applied to the Pope, to appoint Ufford to that see by way of provision. The Pope was glad of such an opportunity of accommodating the King, es-

pecially, as by this act he established the right of privilege against which the King had remonstrated. In the plenitude of his apostolic power, his Holiness promoted Ufford to the primacy of the church of England; but he died June 7th, A. D. 1349, before he was consecrated."*

England was about this time visited with a most destructive pestilence, which at the same time was spreading desolation in several other countries, and proved particularly fatal to the clergy; so that in many churches none could be found to perform divine service. "Before this plague (says Knyghton) "you might have hired a curate for four or "five marks a year, or for two marks and "his board; but after it, you could hardly "find a clergyman who would accept of a "vicarage of twenty marks or twenty pounds "a year."†

On the death of Ufford, Archbishop elect, the King consented to the promotion of his confessor, Thomas Bradwardin, who was consecrated by the Pope at Avignon. At the consecration feast, Cardinal Hugh, one of the Pope's nephews, attempted to turn the new Archbishop (who was singularly humble) into ridicule, by introducing into

* *Anglia Sacra*. tom. 1, p. 42. *Extr. Henry*, vol. viii, p. 37.
† *H. Knyghton*, col. 2600.

the hall, a peasant riding on an ass, who presented a petition to the Pope to make him Archbishop of Canterbury. Though piety was at that time neither much cultivated nor admired in the court of Rome, it is but justice to say, that neither the Pope or cardinals approved of this unseasonable piece of vulgar wit, as they thought it bad policy, to affront a people from whom they received so many benefits. The good man did not long survive his consecration, for he died at Lambeth, August 26th, 1349, seven days after his return to England, leaving the see of Canterbury vacant a third time in the same year.

Simon Islop, secretary of state, and keeper of the privy seal, was elected Archbishop by the monks of Canterbury. This election being confirmed by a bull from the Pope, he was consecrated at St. Paul's, December 20th, 1349. This primate proved one of the most rigid disciplinarians that ever filled the chair of Canterbury. In his first provincial visitation, he deprived several clergymen for their irregularities, which caused some of the bishops to suspect whether their mitres were perfectly secure. Nor was he less solicitous about securing the immunities and temporalities of the church. In the second year of his primacy, he was

joined by his suffragans in a petition to a parliament held at Westminster, for a redress of grievances, occasioned by the encroachments of the secular judges upon the privileges of the clergy; and procured a statute confirming all the privileges and franchises formerly granted in their favour.

After the breaking up of this parliament, the old controversy was renewed between the two Archbishops, about carrying the cross erect in each other's province. To bring this important contest to a close, the King authorized both to carry their cross, but that his grace of York should, within two months after his coming into the province of Canterbury, make a present to that cathedral of a jewel worth forty pounds.*

A strong remonstrance was presented to the King and temporal lords in parliament, against the clergy for the gross abuse of their immunities. It was stated that when a clerk had been found guilty of a capital crime and condemned to perpetual imprisonment by his ordinary, that he was either allowed to make his escape, or live in riot and luxury in the bishop's prison. To remove this ground of complaint, in one of the constitutions published by the primate at Lambeth, in 1351, it is decreed, that

* Warner's Eccles. Hist. vol. i, p. 503.

clerks who have been delivered up by the temporal judges to their ordinaries, and by them condemned to perpetual imprisonment for their crimes, shall receive only bread and water once a-day, on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays; bread and small beer on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays; and bread, beer, and pulse, on Sundays, for the honour of the day.*

In the year 1359, the primate published another constitution, forbidding courts, fairs, and markets to be kept on Sundays, and commanding all persons to go to their parish-churches on that day, to ask pardon for their offences, and to make amends for all the omissions and commissions of the preceding week.† By another constitution published 1362, he commands all christians to keep all the saint's days with great devotion, that they may deserve the intercession of those saints with Almighty God.

From the time of Pope Boniface III., on whom the emperors Phocas conferred the title of "Universal and chief bishop," the popes of Rome having continued their encroachments upon the rights both of the crown, and of private patrons to church benefices, led to the passing of two important acts; first the statute of Mortmain,

* Spelman, con. t. 2, p. 497. † Spelman, p. 599.

in the reign of Edward I., and the second was the provisors. By this statute it was enacted, "that if any person shall procure
"reservation or provisions from the Pope,
"in disturbance of free elections, or of the
"presentees of the King, or other patrons,
"that then the said provisors, their procurators and notaries, shall be apprehended,
"and brought to answer: and in case they
"are convicted, they shall be kept in prison
"till they have made fine and ransom to the
"King at his will, and have satisfied the
"party aggrieved, by paying his damages."†

The passing of these acts were very unpalatable to the Pope, who in return made a formal demand for the tribute King John had bound himself and his successors to pay to the holy see, but had now been discontinued for a number of years. The Pope made this demand with all the haughty assurance he was capable of, and even nominated commissioners to summon Edward before him in case of his refusal. The King had no desire of breaking his peace with the Pope, on account of the state of his affairs on the continent, but he was not disposed calmly to submit to the imperious demands of Urban. He therefore called a parliament, who after mature deliberation, it was re-

† See Statutes at large, p. 25, Edw. III.

solved by the three estates of the realm, that neither King John, nor any other King of England, had power to put his dominions under such subjection without the consent of parliament :—that if the necessities of that King had compelled him to such a measure, it nullified itself, by being contrary to his coronation oath ; and therefore, if the Pope should by any means attempt to support his unjust pretensions, that the whole nation would unite with all their power to oppose him. This resolution, the result of so much cool deliberation, and supported with so much vigour, not only freed Edward, but all the succeeding Kings of England from this infamous tribute.*

The tyranny with which the Roman Catholic clergy treated the laity, is almost incredible, as appears from the following fact. Robert, Lord Morley, one of the most powerful barons in the kingdom, committed some trespass in a park belonging to William Bateman, bishop of Norwich. For this trespass, the bishop prosecuted him with so much rigour, that in spite of all his own power, and of the most earnest interposition of the King in his favour, he was obliged to submit to the following ignominious penance: To walk in his waistcoat, bare-

* Warner, vol. i, p. 564.

headed and bare-foot, with a wax candle weighing six pounds, lighted in his hands through the streets of Norwich, to the cathedral; and there in the presence of a prodigious concourse of people, to beg the bishop's pardon in the most humble posture and language.*

At this time A. D. 1360, a most destructive pestilence spread its wasting influence over this, and several countries on the continent. The mortality was so great, that seven bishopricks became vacant in one year; all which were filled by papal provisions, notwithstanding the statutes which had been made but a few years before to prevent these encroachments of the Pope.

Archbishop Islop did not long survive this great mortality among his brethren, though his affliction was of a different nature. In 1363, he had a paralytick stroke, the debilitating effects of which he laboured under until his death, which took place at Magfield, April 16th, 1366.† On his death the chapter of Canterbury chose William Edyndon, bishop of Winchester, to be primate, but the Pope was determined to convince the English, that their laws could not bind the vicar of Christ, for he pronounced

* *Anglia Sacra*, t. i, p. 415. Extr. Henry, vol. viii, p. 61.

† *Id. ibid*, p. 62.

the election of Edyndon null, and granted a provision to Simon Langham bishop of Ely, and chancellor of England, to the Archbishoprick of Canterbury, who was admitted into it without any opposition.

Langham did not long enjoy the fruits of his promotion ; for in the following year, the Pope presented him with a cardinal's cap, the honour of wearing which, he very imprudently accepted without consulting the King ; who was so offended at his presumption, that he seized the temporalities of his see. The loss of the King's favour had a painful effect on the mind of Langham, for he resigned his archbishoprick, November 28th, 1368, and retired to Avignon, where he lingered out his unhappy days, and died 1378.†

† *Anglia Sacra*, p. 47.

CHAPTER XX.

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* Cotton Abridg. p. 128.

the ignominious yoke, which for ages had galled the necks of an oppressed people, the authority of that court, and the doctrines of that church were attacked more successfully, than could have been expected in that dark age.

The first instrument divine providence was pleased to employ in the glorious reformation, was an Englishman, called John deWickliffe, who was born at a village then called Wiclif, near Richmond, in Yorkshire, about the year 1324. The first historical account we have of him is, when he was a commoner of Queen's college, Oxford, where his reputation for learning, piety, and virtue, rose to a very high degree. He studied with great success theology, civil law, and an extensive acquaintance with the Latin fathers. His extraordinary talents were first publicly employed against the mendicants, or begging friars, who had made many encroachments upon the statutes and privileges of the university, and were endeavouring to establish an exempt jurisdiction. The controversy Wickliffe had to engage in, arose out of those friars enticing the younger students to desert the college for the convent. This had prevented many parents from sending their sons to the university. To remedy this ruinous evil, the chancellor called

a convocation, in which a statute was passed, enacting, that the friars should not receive any youths into their orders under eighteen years of age. In this contest, Wickliffe exposed their seductive practices, with a freedom of speech, and severity of censure, to which they had been as little accustomed, as they had justly merited. But his reproofs did not end here, for he followed them with several well-written tracts against "able beggary."

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profligate lives of the clergy, and the unscriptural doctrines they taught. Nor was he more complacent to him, who under the sacred name of **HOLY FATHER**, commanded the veneration of mankind, but brands him with the opprobrious title of Antichrist,—the worldly Priest of Rome,—“the most cursed of clippers and purse kervers.” Complaints were preferred against Wickliffe to the Pope, founded upon nineteen heterodox articles, very unfairly extracted from his lectures and writings. The sentiments in these extracts inflamed the mind of his Holiness, Pope Gregory XI., who published several bulls against him in 1377, commanding him to be brought to trial for his damnable heresies.* The Pope wrote also to the King, to co-operate with the bishops in bringing Wickliffe to account for his heresy. The King died before the bulls arrived in England; and the university treated their bull with contempt. The bishops, whom the Pope had appointed to examine him, issued their mandate to the chancellor of the university of Oxford, commanding him to cite Wickliffe to appear before them in the church of St. Paul, London, in thirty days.

In the mean time, the first parliament of Richard II. met at Westminster, where it

* Walsing, p. 201—204.

was debated, "whether they might lawfully refuse to send the treasure out of the kingdom, after the Pope required it, on pain of censures, and by virtue of the obedience due to him?" The parliament applied to Dr. Wickliffe for his opinion on this disputed point, who returned his answer, that it was lawful to refuse that payment, as he was prepared to prove by the principles of the law of Christ.

Wickliffe found two firm supporters in John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, and Lord, Henry Percy, earl-marshal of England. These two noblemen not only admired the doctor for his learning and integrity, but most cordially embraced his doctrines, and were determined to defend him from being interrupted in making his defence. These two lords accompanied Wickliffe to St. Paul's, attended by an immense crowd of people of all classes, which had more the appearance of conducting him to a triumph, than to a trial. On opening the business, Wickliffe stood before the commissioners, according to custom, to hear what was laid to his charge; but the earl-marshal demanded a seat for him, saying he would need a soft seat to rest upon, during so tedious an attendance. This indulgence was denied him by the bishop of London,

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To avoid the impending storm which was ready to burst upon him, Dr. Wickliffe left the university of Oxford for ever, and retired to his living at Lutterworth, where a large portion of his time was devoted to the finishing his translation of the bible, and other works in defence of the truth, and opposing error. The contest continuing between the rival Popes, Urban VI. adopted a new method of deciding who was the true successor of St. Peter. He had proved the inefficacy of curses and excommunications, and he now determined to try the effect of more tangible weapons, and bring the contest to a close by force of arms. To assist his Holiness in securing St. Peter's chair, an army and subscriptions were solicited in England, in return for which, pardons and plenary indulgencies, were offered with a

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The English parliament had enacted many laws against the tyrannical usurpations of the court of Rome, but hitherto the Popes had regarded them like thunder that was too distant to do them any harm, and each improved upon the violent proceedings of his predecessor. The tyranny of the Pope was now become intolerable. If a clerk had obtained a sentence in favour of his presentation to a church in the King's court, and the bishop of the diocese had inducted him in consequence of that sentence, it was usual for the Pope, on the complaint of the losing party, to excommunicate the bishop, or to translate him to a foreign see, without either his own consent, or that of the King. To put a check upon these violent proceedings, he revived a statute which was passed in the reign of Edward III., "That if any person travelled beyond sea to procure himself a benefice, either with or without cure, unless he had obtained the King's licence, he should be put out of the protection of the law. By another act passed in the same parliament, it was declared high treason to bring over any summons, sentences, or excommunications, on account of making or executing the said statute. Against these statutes, the Archbishops were allowed to enter their protest, under which they might shield them-

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any new usages without leave. The King also issued a proclamation, commanding the return from Rome, of all who went thither to avoid the statutes of provisors and pre-munire, and forbidding them to bring any of the Pope's bulls or instruments, for evading such statutes, on pain of forfeiture of estate and life.†

Whilst the King and parliament of England, were carrying on this contest with the court of Rome, the Lollards took encouragement to make an attack on the established church. When the King was in Ireland, in 1394, the Duke of York held a parliament at Westminster, when the Lollards presented a remonstrance, containing several articles of complaint against the church and clergy, praying for redress. Among other things they complain—That the English priesthood derived from Rome, which professes a power superior to Angels, cannot be that priesthood which Christ settled with his apostles.—That the vows of celibacy imposed upon the clergy, was the cause of much scandal by the profligate lives of the clergy.—That the pretended miracle of transubstantiation, had led nearly all christendom into idolatry.—That exorcisms and benedictions, pronounced over

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the Lollards, and threatened them with immediate death, if they gave any further encouragement to heretical preachers. This produced a momentary check, for when these great patrons had withdrawn their protection, several of the preachers, not being disposed to risk their lives for their religion, recanted and returned into the bosom of the church.

Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of York, was a most violent enemy to the Lollards, and all who recanted in his province, he compelled them to take the following curious oath, which Dr. Henry has copied from Collier, in its original spelling:—"I —, "before you, worshipful fader and lord arch- "bishop of Yhork, and your clergy, with "my free wil and ful avysed, swere to God "and to al his seyntes, upon this holy gos- "pel, that fro this day forthword, I shal "worship images, with praying and offer- "ing unto them, in the worship of the "seyntes, that they be made after; and "also, Ishal never more despise pylgremage; "ne states of holy chyrche, in no degre.— "And also I shal be buxum to the laws of "holy chyrche, and to yhowe, as to myn "archbishop, and myn other ordinaries and "curates, and keep the laws up my power "and meyntain them. And also, I shal

VOL II. C c

"never more meyntein ne teach en them,
"ne defenden, errors, conclusions, ne tech-
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"doctrine: ne shal her bokes ne swych
"bokes, ne hem or ony suspect or defamed
"of Lollardary, receyve or company with
"all, willingly, or defend in the matters;
"and if I know ony swych, I shal with al
"the hast that I may, do yhowe, or els
"yowr nex officers, to wyten, and of ther
"bokes, &c."*

Soon after the followers of Dr. Wickliffe had received such a severe check, William Courtney, Archbishop of Canterbury died, July 31st, 1396. He was a son of the Earl of Devonshire, and great grandson of Edward I, on his mother's side. Notwithstanding his high birth, he was a prelate of great moderation and humility; yet a steady supporter of the rights and liberties of the church.

Upon the vacancy of the see, Thomas Arundel was translated by a papal bull, from York to Canterbury, without consulting either the King, the convent, or the suffragan bishops.

As soon as Arundel was invested with the power, he commenced a most vigorous at-

* Dr. Henry, vol. viii, p. 77.

tack upon the Lollards. He held a convocation at London, in which he condemned a number of Wickliffe's doctrines, nullified a papal exemption of the city of Oxford, and gave other proof, that he designed to employ all his additional power, by being promoted to the primacy, to suppress the reformation begun by Wickliffe. But providence prevented him executing what he intended, and very soon deprived him of all his power. He was one of the party, which, in the year 1568, obtained a commission from parliament, investing them with the whole power of the state. That party were now overturned, and prosecuted with great severity, for obtaining and executing that commission. The Archbishop and his brother, the Earl of Arundel, were tried by their peers in parliament, in September, 1397, and found guilty of high treason. The conduct of the King was far from being honourable in this affair, for which, the Earl was beheaded, and the Archbishop deprived and banished.*

The vacancy occasioned in the see of Canterbury, by the banishing of Arundel, was filled by the Pope at the King's request, by promoting Walden, the lord treasurer, to the primacy. The Pope, by gratifying the King in this promotion, and sending a bull

* A. Wood Univers. Oxon. p. 190. † Extr. Henry.

to confirm all the transactions of the late parliament, on his part, applied for an appeal of the statutes of provisors and premunire. Not doubting of his success, he translated the bishop of Lincoln to the see of Chester ; but the bishop chose rather to resign his bishoprick, and retire to a cloister, than accept the translation. Upon his refusal, the Pope translated the King's confessor from Llandaff to Chester. The King not approving of the manner in which the Pope was disposing of the bishopricks, consulted the clergy on the subject, and declared, if they would make a stand against these encroachments, he would support them in the dispute ; but they declined taking any active part themselves, and merely advised his Majesty to write to the Pope, requesting him to forbear all further translations. In the mean time, the Pope sent a nuncio to persuade the King to repeal the obnoxious statute of provisors and premunire ; but whatever disposition there might be on the part of the bishops and clergy to favour the papal interest, the nobility and house of commons were determined to put a check upon the holy see.

The affairs of England were now brought to a crisis. The tyranny and extravagance of the court, had so completely exhausted the

solemnly swore to protect the church, in all her privileges and immunities. The King desired the Archbishop to rise and go to his seat, assuring him that all his fears were groundless, for he would not only defend the church in all her possessions, but leave her richer than he found her. On the King expressing himself thus, the Commons were glad to withdraw their proposition.

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* Wilkin, Concil. t. iii, p 252.

his days as a private person, on condition of having an honourable pension for himself and a few favourites. These terms being acceded to, he surrendered himself to the Duke, and was conveyed to the tower of London. Soon after a parliament was called in his name, when, in the presence of a great number of Lords and Commons, he swore to an instrument of resignation; and in the most pusillanimous terms, declared, that if it was in his power, he would appoint the Duke of Lancaster to succeed him. The parliament being assembled again next day, the instrument executed by the King declaring his renunciation was read, when the Lords, and Commons were asked, if they would accept of the resignation, to which both houses gave their unanimous consent, and drew up a charge of male administration, as a ground for deposing the King. The throne being thus declared vacant, the Duke of Lancaster rose up, and claimed the crown by descent and personal services, the parliament assented to it, and he was that day proclaimed King. Thus ended the ignominious reign of Richard II., who was succeeded by the Duke of Lancaster, by the title of Henry IV.

The exertions made by the English parliaments, against the undue exercise of papal

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condemned person to the secular magistrate, who was to cause him to be burned to death in some elevated place, in sight of all the people.* The passing of this act, was the beginning of sorrows to the English nation. Instead of the heads of the church convincing men of their errors in matters of religion, by the force of argument and the word of truth, they commenced a new system of enlightening men by fire, and tormenting them into orthodoxy, by means which cannot be thought of without shuddering. We cannot but notice the vacillancy of some dignitaries of the church at this period. In the reign of Richard, when some of his favourites were to be tried for high treason, these bishops pretended such tenderness in the cause of blood, that they pleaded the canons of the church, forbidding them to sit in such causes, and all withdrew; but in a very few years after, they made themselves the only judges where life was to be forfeited, in a manner the most abhorrent to human nature, and in direct opposition to the canon of scripture.

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CHAPTER XXI.

Trial and execution of Sir W. Sawtre, the first martyr in England, for heresy.—Murder of King Richard at Pomfret castle.—Disputes between the house of commons and the clergy.—Canons of the council at Oxford, against the Lollards.—Persecutions, trial, imprisonment, and death of Wm. Thorp.—Canons made at a convocation at St. Paul's.—Martyrdom of Badby, a tailor.—Spread of Wickliffe's doctrines excite considerable alarm among the bishops.—Twelve examiners appointed to make extracts from Wickliffe's writings.—Death and character of Henry IV.—Wickliffe's works burnt by the primate at St. Paul's cross.—Trial and condemnation of Lord Cobham.—His confession of faith.—Escapes from the tower.—A diabolical scheme of the clergy to excite the King against the Lollards.—Death of Archbishop Arundel.—Chicheley elected to the primacy.—Severe statutes against the Lollards, made in a parliament at Leicester.—The kingdom involved in a French war.—The university of Oxford sent a catalogue of abuses in the church, to the council of Constance.—Trial and martyrdom of John Claydon.—Lord Cobham re-taken & executed.—Schism in the papacy.—Imperious demands of the Pope, firmly opposed by the King.—Death of Henry V.—The Pope raises an army to suppress the reformation in Bohemia.—Convocation in London.—Quarrel between the Pope and the council of Basil.—Council elects another Pope.—Death and character of Archbishop Chicheley.

The power granted to the bishops for trying and executing heretics, was not permit-

but he had come to a point at which he felt that insincerity was too dear a price to pay for life ; and was resolved to endure any torments rather than renounce the truth ; on which he was replaced in the tub, the fire was kindled, and he continued as long as he was able, calling upon the Lord Jesus Christ to receive his soul. His body was reduced to ashes, March 1, A.D. 1410.

The martyrdom of Badby excited a strong feeling of dissatisfaction throughout the country, and was nearly leading to a rupture between the King and the Commons. The Commons had moved for a bill, to prevent clerks convicted of any crime, from being tried in the ecclesiastical courts ; assigning as a reason, what was confirmed by daily experience, that numbers escaped the punishment they had merited. The King was afraid of displeasing the clergy, lest they should join with those who disputed his title to the crown, and refused to give his assent to the bill. Under the influence of disappointment, the Commons associated the King's refusal to them, with his signing the warrant for the execution of Badby, as a strong intimation what favour the laity might expect. To shew their resentment, they presented a bill to prevent the King interfering with elections, fining every sheriff one

to profess his belief,—“That after consecration, the substance of the bread and wine “no longer remained, but was converted “into the substance of the body and blood “of Christ, which were as really and truly “in their proper substance and nature in the “sacrament, as they were in the womb of “the Virgin Mary, as they hung upon the “cross, as they lay in the grave, and as “they now reside in heaven.” On hearing this he stood aghast, and, after some hesitation, declared, “That whatever might be “the consequence, he could neither understand nor believe that doctrine.” On this the Archbishop pronounced him an obstinate heretic. He was first degraded in the church of St. Paul of all his orders, and delivered as a lay-man to the mayor and sheriffs of London, with the hypocritical recommendation to mercy, a form with which the church of Rome always delivered over its victims to be burnt alive. He was accordingly burnt to ashes in Smithfield, and had the honour of being the first of that “noble army of martyrs” in England, who suffered this painful kind of death, for protesting against the corruptions of popery, and maintaining the truths of Christianity, as now believed by all protestant churches.*

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The execution of such a respectable man as Sir William Sawtre, made a powerful impression on the minds of the public, and many of the Wickliffites began to conceal their sentiments to preserve their lives. Some of them when brought to their trial renounced their sentiments, and took sanctuary under the protection of holy mother church, and several years elapsed before any one was found, who had fortitude to endure the fiery trial. But the leaven of divine truth which had found its way into different parts of the kingdom, continued to operate, though secretly.

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“ death ;” though he knew perfectly that they could do nothing else.

On the afternoon of the same day, Badby was conducted to Smithfield, where he was placed in a large tub, surrounded with dry wood, and fastened to a stake with an iron chain. Before the fire was kindled, prince Henry, (afterward Henry V.) earnestly entreated him to save his life by renouncing his heresies ; promising him a comfortable maintenance for life, if he would submit to the opinion of the church. The pix was then brought from St. Batholomew’s church, with twelve tapers burning before it. It was presented to Badby, when the prince again pressed him to save himself from such a painful death. The poor man expressed his warmest gratitude to the prince, but declared that what was presented before him was only hallowed bread, and not God’s body ; and so firmly did he believe his opinions to be true, that he could not renounce them, even to save his life. No sooner had he said the words, than the pile was set on fire. When he felt the violence of the flames, his cries for mercy touched the prince with compassion, who commanded the flames to be extinguished and the sufferer to be taken down. In that condition the prince repeated his promises, if he would renounce his opinions ;

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hundred pounds, who should make a false return. They also refused to grant him a subsidy, till he wearied them out of it by prolonging the session to such an immoderate length.

The violent proceedings of the church against the doctrines of Wickliffe, did not at all abate their spread. There were several doctors of Oxford, who publicly defended them, both in writing and disputation. They excited considerable alarm among the bishops and heads of houses, who pressed the Archbishop to visit that university. In the summer of 1411, the primate set out with a great retinue to Oxford; but before he reached the city, he was met by the chancellor and proctors, who informed him, that if the object of his visit was to take a view of their colleges, he should be received and entertained with all the respect due to his high rank; but if he came as their visitor, he could not be admitted, because they were exempted by several papal bulls from all episcopal visitation. Such a repulse, was any thing but pleasing to the proud primate, who resented it by an appeal to the King; and on February 9, A. D. 1412, both parties pleaded their cause before the King; at the close of which, his majesty pronounced a definitive sentence against the university.*

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condemned, was this,—“That the sacrament of the body of Christ, consecrated by the priest on the altar, was not the true body of Christ, by virtue of the words of the sacrament; but that, after the sacramental words spoken by the priest to make the body of Christ, the material bread did remain upon the altar as at the beginning; neither was it turned into the very body of Christ after the sacramental words spoken by the priest.” He was also accused of saying, that “no priest was able to make the body of Christ.” On these subjects he was examined by the Archbishop, in the presence of nine other bishops, and many of the nobility. The primate pressed him earnestly to renounce his errors, and believe as the church believed; and declared, that if he would do this, “he would gage his soul for him at the day of judgment.” But Badby had learnt to believe that Jesus Christ is the only name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved, and consequently, he durst not risk the salvation of his soul upon the pledge of the primate; who, immediately pronounced him an obstinate heretic, and delivered him to the secular magistrates, “desiring them very instantly not to put him to

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The martyrdom of Badby excited a strong feeling of dissatisfaction throughout the country, and was nearly leading to a rupture between the King and the Commons. The Commons had moved for a bill, to prevent clerks convicted of any crime, from being tried in the ecclesiastical courts ; assigning as a reason, what was confirmed by daily experience, that numbers escaped the punishment they had merited. The King was afraid of displeasing the clergy, lest they should join with those who disputed his title to the crown, and refused to give his assent to the bill. Under the influence of disappointment, the Commons associated the King's refusal to them, with his signing the warrant for the execution of Badby, as a strong intimation what favour the laity might expect. To shew their resentment, they presented a bill to prevent the King interfering with elections, fining every sheriff one

thirteen canons were made. In the preface to these canons, it is pronounced the most horrid of all crimes, to dispute any of the doctrines, or disobey any of the decrees promulgated by the Pope—"who carried the "keys of eternal life and eternal death;—"was the vicegerent, not of a mere man, "but the true God, on earth; and to whom "God had committed the government of "the kingdom of heaven."* How to harmonize this strong declaration of the primate with existing circumstances, will not be found a very easy task. There were at that time two Popes, who had each sent the other to the devil, and were both declared contumacious heretics, by the council of Pisa that same year.†

The Archbishop intended by his institutes, to extirpate the doctrines of Wickliffe, by inflicting certain wholesome severities on those who propagated or professed them. The first who suffered after passing these canons, and the second that was burnt at the stake in England, was a tailor of the name of Badby, in the diocese of Worcester, who was tried and found guilty of heresy by the bishop of that see, January 2, A.D. 1410, and sent with a copy of his sentence to the primate. The heresy for which Badby was

* Wilkin. Cou. t. iii, p. 271. † Du Pin, cent. xv, c. 1.

condemned, was this,—“That the sacrament of the body of Christ, consecrated by the priest on the altar, was not the true body of Christ, by virtue of the words of the sacrament; but that, after the sacramental words spoken by the priest to make the body of Christ, the material bread did remain upon the altar as at the beginning; neither was it turned into the very body of Christ after the sacramental words spoken by the priest.” He was also accused of saying, that “no priest was able to make the body of Christ.” On these subjects he was examined by the Archbishop, in the presence of nine other bishops, and many of the nobility. The primate pressed him earnestly to renounce his errors, and believe as the church believed; and declared, that if he would do this, “he would gage his soul for him at the day of judgment.” But Badby had learnt to believe that Jesus Christ is the only name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved, and consequently, he durst not risk the salvation of his soul upon the pledge of the primate; who, immediately pronounced him an obstinate heretic, and delivered him to the secular magistrates, “desiring them very instantly not to put him to

“ death ;” though he knew perfectly that they could do nothing else.

On the afternoon of the same day, Badby was conducted to Smithfield, where he was placed in a large tub, surrounded with dry wood, and fastened to a stake with an iron chain. Before the fire was kindled, prince Henry, (afterward Henry V.) earnestly entreated him to save his life by renouncing his heresies ; promising him a comfortable maintenance for life, if he would submit to the opinion of the church. The pix was then brought from St. Batholomew’s church, with twelve tapers burning before it. It was presented to Badby, when the prince again pressed him to save himself from such a painful death. The poor man expressed his warmest gratitude to the prince, but declared that what was presented before him was only hallowed bread, and not God’s body ; and so firmly did he believe his opinions to be true, that he could not renounce them, even to save his life. No sooner had he said the words, than the pile was set on fire. When he felt the violence of the flames, his cries for mercy touched the prince with compassion, who commanded the flames to be extinguished and the sufferer to be taken down. In that condition the prince repeated his promises, if he would renounce his opinions ;

but he had come to a point at which he felt that insincerity was too dear a price to pay for life ; and was resolved to endure any torments rather than renounce the truth ; on which he was replaced in the tub, the fire was kindled, and he continued as long as he was able, calling upon the Lord Jesus Christ to receive his soul. His body was reduced to ashes, March 1, A.D. 1410.

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hundred pounds, who should make a false return. They also refused to grant him a subsidy, till he wearied them out of it by prolonging the session to such an immoderate length.

The violent proceedings of the church against the doctrines of Wickliffe, did not at all abate their spread. There were several doctors of Oxford, who publicly defended them, both in writing and disputation. They excited considerable alarm among the bishops and heads of houses, who pressed the Archbishop to visit that university. In the summer of 1411, the primate set out with a great retinue to Oxford; but before he reached the city, he was met by the chancellor and proctors, who informed him, that if the object of his visit was to take a view of their colleges, he should be received and entertained with all the respect due to his high rank; but if he came as their visitor, he could not be admitted, because they were exempted by several papal bulls from all episcopal visitation. Such a repulse, was any thing but pleasing to the proud primate, who resented it by an appeal to the King; and on February 9, A. D. 1412, both parties pleaded their cause before the King; at the close of which, his majesty pronounced a definitive sentence against the university.*

* Henry Extr. Fuller's Church Hist., b. iv, p. 164.

lished in all the churches in his province, forbidding them to keep their shops open on the Lord's day; which, forgetting that he was not living under the mosaic dispensation, he described in this manner: "The Lord's day, viz. the seventh day of the week, which the Lord blessed and made holy, and on which, after six days' works, he rested from all his labour."*

The church having engaged all the civil powers of the state, to assist in searching for and rooting out the Lollards, and their books, great numbers charged with that unpardonable crime, were now brought before the bishop's court, among whom was one John Claydon, a furrier in London, who was taken before the primate, and several bishops and doctors, August 17, A.D. 1415, by Thomas Fauconer, mayor, charged with having several English books found in his house. When put upon his trial, he was charged with being a relapsed heretic; and confessed,—that he had been long suspected of Lollardy;—that he had been imprisoned for it two years in Conway castle, and three years in the Fleet, near London;—and that he had abjured it before the late primate. To prove that he had relapsed, the English books found in his house were produced by

* Id. *ibid.* p. 22.

the mayor ; particularly one called *the Lanterne of Light*, which he said, was the vilest and most perverse book he had ever seen. Three of the servants were brought to give evidence, that their master used to hear people read these books to him (as he could not read himself) ; and that he seemed to approve of what he heard. The Archbishop appointed the examiner-general of Canterbury to examine the witnesses, and certain doctors to examine the books, and then adjourned the court to the 19th of the same month. On that day the witnesses confirmed their former depositions, of him having heard the books read, and the doctors who had examined the books, declared, that they were full of heresies ; especially the *Lanterne of Light*, which contained no fewer than fifteen. The Archbishop then condemned the books to be burnt, and pronounced John Claydon a relapsed heretic, and delivered him to the secular power, by whom he was conducted to Smithfield, where he was burned to ashes.*

Notwithstanding the zeal and activity of the agents of the church, in searching out the Lollards, and the severity with which those were treated who fell into their hands, their numbers increased amazingly in every part of the land, and spread with still greater

* Henry, vol. x, p. 22, 23.

rapidity on the continent. Of those who were charged with this crime, many of them were put to the rack on their examinations, to compel them to give up the names and places of abode, of all they knew that countenanced the heresy. By these means, the retreat of Lord Cobham was discovered, and he was at length apprehended by Lord Powis, who brought him to Westminster, where a parliament was then sitting, December, A.D. 1418, by which he was condemned, on his former sentence, to be strangled and burnt. To increase his ignomy, contrary to the sentence, he was drawn upon a hurdle to the gallows, hung up by the middle with a chain, and burnt alive; all which he bore with the same constancy and firmness, he had ever evinced in defence of the doctrines he believed. His death was a great discouragement to the Lollards, as they now saw, that neither rank nor influence could defend them from the cruel grasp of an intolerant priesthood; the despotism and corruption of its head, being as boundless as the luxury, immorality, and licentiousness of the inferior clergy.

It will be necessary to notice here, a schism in the papacy; which, having subsisted for upwards of fifty years, was put an end to by the council of Constance, which

deposed the three reigning infallible Pontiffs, namely, John XXIII., Gregory XII., and Benedict XIII., and elected Martin V. We shall not occupy our pages by transcribing the disgraceful conduct of the above pretended vicars of Christ on earth, who year after year, loaded each other with reciprocal maledictions, calumnies, and excommunications. Nor was their successor, Martin V., possessed of a better spirit than the worst of the three that were deposed; for he had no sooner got seated in St. Peter's chair, than he began to revive the most extravagant claims of his haughtiest predecessors, and to talk in the most imperious strain, to the greatest princes and prelates. In proof of this, we refer to his abusive language in the several bulls he directed to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and to the King and parliament of England, in the years 1426 and 1427,* concerning the law called *premunire*, which prevented the Popes from disposing of all the benefices in the kingdom at pleasure. He treated the Archbishop with great asperity, and gave him the most opprobrious names, for suffering "that detestable, execrable, abominable law," as he calls it, to exist so long. He treated the King and parliament in a similar manner, telling them

* Wilkin. Concil. p 471—487.

that he was "constituted by the Lord Jesus Christ, supreme head over them and the universal church; and that if they did not repeal that odious statute, they would all be damned." To regain the favour of the Pope, the primate went to the house of commons, and with tears and prayers, intreated them to consent to the repeal of the obnoxious act; but the hard-hearted commons were alike unmoved, both by the tears and prayers of the primate. Nor was the King any more disposed to comply than the commons, with the imperious demands of this haughty Pontiff; to whom he sent an embassy, desiring him not to attempt disposing of any of the benefices in England which belonged to the crown. The King informed him further, that if he should have to engage in a war in defence of the holy see, that the Peter-pence, and other money usually sent to Rome, should be appropriated towards defraying the expenses of the expedition. The Pope was very far from being pleased with this message, and gave a very evasive answer: when, the ambassadors declared before the whole conclave, that they were instructed by his Majesty to say, that, unless his request was complied with, he would use his prerogative in the points demanded. Had all the preceding Kings of

England, treated the unjust demands of the court of Rome in a similar manner, papal encroachments in England would have been unknown in the days of Henry the Fifth. A circumstance occurred soon after, which convinced the Pope that he had to do with a prince of spirit and resolution. The see of York became vacant, when the Pope, in the plenitude of his apostolic power, translated the bishop of Lincoln to that see. The dean and chapter of York, at the King's command, insisted on the statutes of provisors, and refused to admit the bishop. When his Holiness found that Henry was as prompt in acting, as he was bold in threatening, he quietly acquiesced, and the bishop was glad to find his way back to his former diocese. The year following, Henry gave another proof of his determination to govern his own kingdom. There were at this time several French monasteries in England, which had shewn considerable disaffection whilst Henry was pursuing his conquests in France. On his return, he immediately turned the monks out of the convents, and bestowed their revenues upon other bodies of ecclesiastics more in the English interest.* This was one of the last acts of Henry relating to the church; for having

* Warner's Eccles. Hist., vol. i, p. 539.

with his Queen, celebrated the festival of Pentecost in great state at the *Louvre* in France, he was soon after seized with a violent flux, of which he died August 31, A.D. 1422, in the thirty-fourth year of his age, and the tenth of his reign.

The reformation begun in England by Wickliffe, had extended to different parts of the continent, but particularly in Bohemia. In 1428, the Pope sent a bull into England, as well as into other countries, commanding solemn processions to be made, on the first Sunday of every month, in all churches and church-yards, in order to draw down the vengeance of heaven on those heretical Bohemians; promising sixty days indulgence to all who attended these processions, or who said twenty-five *pater-nosters* with the same pious intention.* But his Holiness did not think it would be safe trusting to supernatural means alone, for the destruction of these enemies of the church; but proclaimed a croisade against the Bohemians, granting the pardon of all their sins, and the happiness of heaven to all who died on that expedition; and proportionate indulgences to all who contributed to its support.†

The death of the late King, had given a slight check to the persecution against the

* Wilkin. Con. p. 492. † Id. p. 511. Extr. Henry, vol. x, p. 26.

Lollards; but the zeal of Archbishop Chicheley, revived it again with vigor. At a convocation he held with his clergy, two priests were accused of heresy. The heresy with which they were charged, consisted in refusing to kneel to a crucifix, and having books in their studies, written against transubstantiation, and condemning the monastic institution, and auricular confession as inventions of the devil. These opinions they were obliged to renounce publicly at St. Paul's cross, on which they were released.

The primate held a convocation in London, when the clergy granted the King a tenth for carrying on the war with France. The Pope's nuncio seeing the clergy so free in their supplies for the King; ventured to try their pulse towards the Pope. He declaimed long on the importance of the war in which his Holiness was engaged against the heretics, and demanded a tenth from the clergy for its support. To this demand the clergy gave a flat denial; he applied again, and produced a letter from the Pope, whose demand was peremptory; but this made the matter worse. However, they at last offered him eight-pence in the mark of their annual rents, providing, that the paying of the money would not be an infringement upon the King's prerogative, and the laws of the land.

But this was not the only check which the ecclesiastical supremacy received at this time in England, for the Pope's nuncio was thrown into prison for collecting money contrary to law; and was kept there for a length of time, notwithstanding the threatenings denounced in the court of Rome. Pope Martin V. in conformity with a decree of the council of Constance, called a general council to meet at Basil, in July A.D. 1431, and appointed Julian, cardinal of St. Angels, to preside in his name. But before the council met the Pope died, and was succeeded by Gabriel Condolmicas, who assumed the name of Eugenius IV. who confirmed the nomination of Julian to preside in the council. In the second session, February 15, A. D. 1432, the council decreed, —That a general council, when sitting, was supreme head of the church, to whose censure all persons (the Pope not excepted) were subject;—That the Pope could not dissolve a general council without the consent of the members. These decrees so irritated the Pope, that he published a bull of dissolution; which so offended the fathers at Basil, that they threatened to depose his Holiness, and elect another Pope in his place, if he did not recall his bull.* This subject

* Du Pin, cent. xv, chap. 3.

would not have been noticed here, but as it lead to another schism in the see of Rome, which had considerable influence on the affairs of England.

In this distracted state of the papacy, the Archbishop of Canterbury called a convocation of the clergy of his province November 7, A. D. 1433, to give their opinion on the following questions. Is it in the power of the Pope to dissolve a general council? Can the council of Basil depose Pope Eugenius? If that council depose Eugenius, and elect another, will you adhere to him, or to the Pope chosen by the council? A few days being allowed to deliberate on these questions, they returned the following answers. The Pope has power to dissolve a general council: The council has not power to depose Pope Eugenius: If that council depose Pope Eugenius, we will still acknowledge him as lawful Pope.*

Eugenius, encouraged by the decision of the English clergy in his favour, published a bull, to remove the council from Basil to Ferrara, and commanded the Archbishop of Canterbury, and all the clergy of England who had a right to be members of a general council, to attend him at Ferrara. But though the prelates, abbots, priors, and the

* Wilkin, Concil. p. 328. Id. p. 525.

civil government of England, favoured the Pope, the inferior clergy positively refused to contribute one penny towards the expences of the representatives ; so that it is probable but few were sent.

The Pope having assembled his council at Ferrara, his first act was to excommunicate all the members of the council of Basil ; and that council soon returned the compliment, by suspending the Pope from the exercise of his office, and excommunicating all the members of his council. The council of Basil did not stop here, but having deposed Eugenius, they elected Amadeus, duke of Savoy, (who had resigned his dominions, and lived in retirement,) to be Pope. Thus another schism was produced in the church, and the two Popes, as usual, cursed and excommunicated one another, and all their respective followers. Whilst this contest was carrying on between two Popes, and two general councils, thundering out their anathemas against each other to the disgrace of the christian name, Eugenius died, and was succeeded by Nicholas the Fifth, to whom Felix (the name assumed by the Duke of Savoy,) agreed on certain conditions to resign the Poppedom.

Archbishop Chicheley, finding himself worn out with age and infirmities, wrote to

the Pope for leave to resign his see. In his letter to the Pope, he says, "that he thought "in his conscience his brother of Bath, a man "of greatest merit, and in all respects best "qualified for the post of primate." Whether the Pope made any reply to the request of the primate is not known, for the Archbishop died April 12th, A. D. 1443, and was succeeded in the primacy by John Stafford, bishop of Bath, a younger son of the Earl of Stafford.

Chicheley was a learned man for the age in which he lived, and a great promoter of learning. He founded the colleges of All-Souls, and another called Barnard-college in Oxford. He repaired the library at Cambridge, and replenished it with a number of excellent books. He founded a college at Higham-Ferries, which at the suppression was valued at one hundred and fifty-six pounds per annum. He was a violent persecutor of the Lollards, but not so fond of burning them as his predecessor; observing, that these scenes of horror excited compassion for the sufferers, and indignation against their persecutors.†

† Duch.Vita Chicheley, p. 47, 48. Wilkin. Conc. p. 637.

CHAPTER XXII.

Contest between the civil and ecclesiastical courts.—Death and character of Cardinal Beaufort.—The Pope sends a present to the King, to induce him to make the clergy pay their tax.—Death of Archbishop Stafford.—Thomas Bouchier made primate.—Constantinople taken by the Turks.—The Pope's conduct on the occasion.—Privileges granted the clergy by Edward IV.—Illiterate and dissolute lives of the clergy.—Deistical writings of bishop Peacock.—Martyrdom of John Goose.—Disputes between the begging friars and secular clergy.—Curious canons made at a convocation at York.—Death of Richard III. and ascension of Henry VII.—Printing introduced by Archbishop Bouchier.—Morton elected primate.—Henry seeks the support of the clergy.—Pastoral letter from the primate.—The immorality of the clergy.—Indulgences sent into England.—Avaricious conduct of Henry VII.—His attempt to get Henry VI canonized.—The jubilee.—Death and character of Cardinal Morton.—Warham elected primate.—Death and character of Henry VII.

In the second year of Archbishop Stafford's primacy, he held a convocation of the clergy, about granting a subsidy to his Majesty. The clergy at the same time, appointed proctors and solicitors to attend the next parliament, to obtain a redress of their grievances, which arose out of the meaning

of a word in the statute of premunire. In that statute it was enacted, "If any purchase
"or pursue, in the court of Rome or *else-*
"*where*, any such transactions, processes,
"and sentences, of excommunication, bulls,
"instruments, or any other things, which
"touch the King, against him, his regality,
"or realm," &c. they shall incur the penalties in the statute. By the court of Rome, or *elsewhere*, the clergy understood the court of Rome, whether the court was held at Rome or any other place; but the common lawyers understood the court of Rome or any other court; and when any spiritual court in England, presumed to judge any cause that did not strictly belong to them, the courts at Westminster not only granted prohibitions, but punished the spiritual judges in a premunire.* But no notice was taken of this subject by the King or parliament, who left the two courts to act as a check one against the other.

About this time (1447) died H. Beaufort, great uncle to the King, cardinal of England, and bishop of Winchester, which see he held forty-three years. Though he held such important stations in the church, he seems to have made it his first business, to accumulate all the wealth he could; and

* Ruffhead's Stat., vol. i, p. 406.

actually became the richest nobleman in the kingdom. His nephew, King Henry V., pledged his crown with him for twenty thousand pounds; an immense sum to have been possessed by any individual at that day. It has been remarked, that his ambitious projects, to which his birth, riches, and station, gave great facilities, were never checked by a religious scruple. His conduct towards the Duke of Gloucester, when protector, and the active part he took in procuring his death, has left a stain upon his character which can never be wiped off. His pride and ambition, were only equalled by his love of money, which was immeasurable. His only act of charity, of which posterity is informed, was the hospital of St. Cross, which he founded near the city of Winchester, in which to maintain a few old men in mere necessities, and to support one clergyman in luxury and laziness. When this rich prelate found that he could not avoid the common fate of mortals, and that death would separate him from his beloved wealth, he sunk into despair, and expired in a fit of prophane fury.*

King Henry VI. was one of the most imbecile princes, that ever wore the English crown. Pope Eugenius was well acquainted

* Warner's Eccles. Hist., vol. i, p. 555.

with this fact, and as he considered all the clergy in the christian world as his subjects, he thought this a favourable time to impose a tax of one-tenth on the English clergy. The Popes had often proved, that after all the professions of the clergy of attachment to the see of Rome, it was not without difficulty they could lay hold of their money. The Pope endeavoured to engage the King to assist his collector, in compelling the clergy to part with their pence; and his infallibility knowing that little minds are pleased with little things, sent Henry a present of a consecrated rose of gold, and in his explanation of the mysterious meanings of the rose, he did not omit urging him to use all his authority, to induce the clergy to pay their tax pleasantly. The rose was received with great ceremony, and the chancellor expatiated largely on the beauties, and virtues of the rose; but as to the tax, he told the collector, his Majesty should send a deputation to converse with his Holiness on that subject, and forbade him to collect any money in England, until the deputation returned.*

The foreign and domestic broils in which the English were at this time involved, occupied so much of their attention, that but little is found of importance in the ecclesias-

* Wilkin, Concil. p. 548.

tical history of this period. Archbishop Stafford died A.D. 1452, and was succeeded in the primacy by John Kemp, Archbishop of York, who only occupied the see about eighteen months, and on his death, Thomas Bouchier, bishop of Ely, and brother to the Earl of Essex, was promoted to the primacy.

On the twenty-ninth of May, A.D. 1452, all the Christian princes, and states in Europe, were thrown into a state of the greatest alarm by the taking of Constantinople, by Mahomed II., Emperor of the Turks. Many of the European nations were so much engaged in war, that they could not be brought to unite against the common enemy; and the clergy were left to fight them alone with their spiritual weapons. Processions were considered as the most effectual means, of procuring the divine favour and assistance.

In March A.D. 1453, Archbishop Kemp published an order for processions to be made for a whole year. As the processions made by the priests at home, had no effect in driving the Turks from Constantinople, in A. D. 1463, Pope Pius II. published a long, eloquent, and pathetic bull, engaging to march in person at the head of a Christian army against the Turks, and most earnestly exhorting all Christians to take the cross, or to contribute by their money to the suc-

cess of the expedition ; promising the pardon of sin, and the happiness of heaven, to all who complied with his desire. The Pope sent a bull into England, imposing a tax of one-tenth on the benefices of all the clergy ; but Edward IV., in whose reign it came, was not willing to acknowledge the Pope's right to tax his clergy, wrote to the primate and desired him to raise such a sum by a voluntary contribution, as would satisfy the Pope, and prevent the publication of his bull. This method was pursued ; but so reluctant were the clergy to part with their money, that it was with difficulty the primate could prevail upon them to grant sixpence in the pound.*

At a convocation of the clergy held by the Archbishop, it was decreed, that the religious who throw off the habit of the cloister, and entered on parochial cures, should forfeit their benefices, and be punished as revolters from their order.—That no living should be let to farm without the bishop's leave.—That marriages and wills should not be valid without two witnesses.

Edward IV. finding he had need of the support of the clergy, to secure which, by an unwarrantable stretch of his prerogative, he granted them a charter, that rendered

* Wilkin, *Con.* p. 584—593. Extr. Henry, vol. x, p. 36.

them almost entirely independent of the civil government. By that charter, he rescinded the famous statute of premunire, which no entreaty, could ever persuade the parliament to repeal. By the charter he granted them; all civil judges and magistrates, are prohibited from taking any notice of any treasons, murders, rapes, robberies, thefts, or any other crimes committed by archbishops, bishops, priests, deacons, or any person in holy orders. If any person apprehended for a crime pretended that he was in orders, though no such thing had been heard of, the civil magistrate was commanded to deliver him to the bishop or his official, to determine whether he was in orders or not.† The above may account for the statement given by a contemporary historian, who says, religion and learning were at that time both on the decline;—that a right discharge of the functions of a parish priest, had almost grown into disuse;—that the universities bestowed degrees on those who had neither learning, morals, nor any kind of merit to recommend them;—that this corruption in the universities, inundated the country with ignorance, and filled the parishes with clergy, whose lives were a disgrace to their profession. Nor does the

† Wilkin, Concil, p. 583.

picture drawn of the clergy by Archbishop Bourchier, represent them in any brighter colours. He says, that many of the clergy, both secular and regular, were ignorant illiterate blockheads, or rather idiots; that they were as profligate as they were ignorant, neglecting their cures, strolling about the country in company with bad women; spending the revenues of their benefices in feasting and drinking, fornication and adultery.*

What the Archbishop says of the ignorance and immorality of the clergy, may, in part, be accounted for, as an effect of the great discouragements given in those unhappy times to the pursuit of learning, as the possession of it did not promote, so the total want of it did not prevent preferment; for those who had either money or rich friends, however ignorant or profligate, might be loaded with dignities and benefices. Dr. Thomas Gascoigne, chancellor of Oxford, A. D. 1443, says, "I knew a certain illiterate idiot, the son of a mad knight, who, for being the companion, or rather the fool, of the sons of a great family of the royal blood, was made archdeacon of Oxford before he was eighteen years of age; and soon after obtained two rich

* Wilkin Coneil. p. 573.

“rectories and twelve prebends. I asked
“him one day what he thought of learning.
“As for learning, said he, I despise it. I
“have better livings than any of you great
“doctors, and I believe as much as any of
“you. What do you believe? I believe,
“said he, that there are three Gods in one
“person, I believe all that God believes.†

About this time we meet with the first deistical writer in England. Raynold Peacock, bishop of Chichester. He published several books in favour of natural reason above the scriptures. He was classed amongst the Lollards, because he adopted the opinions of Wickliffe, against the natural presence of Christ in the eucharist. His preaching became very popular amongst the lower orders, who were excited to acts of desperation, from hearing him declaim so vehemently against the tithes, residences and revenues of bishops. Several lives were lost by the outrageous mobs, both in Kent and Wiltshire. He was summoned by the Archbishop to a synod at Lambeth, where his writings were examined and condemned, but on professing to renounce his errors, he was allowed to return to his see; but continuing to propagate his opinions, he was a second time brought to his trial, when he was sentenced

† Ant. Wood. Hist. Univer. Oxon. p. 220.

to go to St. Paul's church-yard in his episcopal habit, and his books to be publicly burnt; —to be deprived of his bishoprick, and a certain pension assigned him to live on in an abbey, where he soon after died.

Though the persecution against the Lollards was carried on with great cruelty, yet we only hear of one person, called John Goose, who was burnt for heresy in the reign of Edward IV. This man when about to suffer, desired the sheriff to let him have some meat, which on being set before him he said, "I will eat a good dinner, for I shall have a smart shower, before I get my supper." He was burned on Tower-hill, in August, A. D. 1473.

It was during the agitated reign of Edward IV. that a violent dispute was carried on between the secular clergy and the begging friars. One Thomas Holden a mendicant friar, when preaching at St. Paul's cross in London, during Michaelmas term, maintained that Jesus Christ had been a beggar, and that they, on that account, were his greatest favourites, and entitled to the peculiar regard and bounty of the faithful. This controversy engaged several disputants, who wrote with great warmth on both sides. In favour of the mendicants, were Henry Parker of Doncaster convent; and John

Milvern of Briston. Against them, were Dr. Thomas Wilson, dean of St. Paul's; and William Ivy, canon of St. Paul's. An appeal was at last made to the Pope, who published a bull, A. D. 1475, declaring the doctrine of the mendicants to be heretical, and ought to be trodden under foot by all men.*

George Neville, Archbishop of York, held a convocation of the province of York, A.D. 1476, at which several curious canons were made; some of which we notice, to assist us in forming some suitable idea of the religious instruction of that period. By the first canon, every parish priest is commanded to preach four times in the year to his people, either himself or by another, and explain to them in English, without any fantastical subtilties,—the fourteen articles of faith,—the ten precepts of the decalogue,—the two precepts of the gospel,—the seven works of mercy,—the seven mortal sins,—the seven principal virtues,—and the seven sacraments of grace. To enable the clergy to perform this task, the convocation subjoined an explanation of each of these particulars, which forms a system of the catholic theology of the fifteenth century; but though curious enough, from its length

* Fox, p. 659. Fuller, p. 132. Bodin's Hist. Church, p. 133.

we can only insert a little of it. In the explanation of the ten precepts of the decalogue, the first commandment is said to be a prohibition of all enchantments; superstitious characters, and such figments; the second is entirely omitted; and to keep up the number, the tenth is divided into two. Such were the liberties taken by holy mother church, with the words she professes to believe, were spoken by Jehovah himself. They give no explanation of luxury, though it is one of the seven *mortal* sins, probably, because it would be found to have a more pointed application to the habits of the clergy, than the laity. But we must give them credit for the laudable desire they discover, to prevent the poor laity from being damned, for not paying their tithes punctually and fully to the church. To furnish them with every information, on a subject so essential to salvation, they have given them a complete catalogue of every thing that is tithable.*

At the memorable battle of Bosworth, the particulars of which are recorded in our civil history, King Richard III. was slain, when Henry, Earl of Richmond, ascended the throne of England, by the title of Henry VII. The ornamental crown being taken from the head of the unfortunate Richard,

* Wilkin, Concil. p. 599—695. Vide Henry, vol. x. p. 39.

was placed upon the head of Henry, in the field where the battle was fought, and the whole army joined in singing *Te-Deum*. On his approach to London, he was met by the Mayor, several chartered companies, with a great number of nobility and gentry on horseback, to St. Paul's church, where *Te-Deum* was again sung; and from the church he went to his lodgings at the bishop's palace. No time was lost in preparing for his coronation, which was performed by Cardinal Bouchier, Archbishop of Canterbury, October 30th, A.D. 1485.

The Archbishop did not long survive the coronation of his new sovereign, for he died in January, A. D. 1486, after holding the highest office in the church of England for thirty-two years. The only thing of a national importance, in which this primate took an active part, was that of introducing the art of printing into England, in the year 1464. The Archbishop being informed that a printing press was set up at Harlem, prevailed on the King to send over two men in the character of merchants, the better to conceal their business. They were furnished with a thousand marks, three hundred of which were provided by the Archbishop, to cover their expenses whilst they made themselves masters of this mystery. Soon after

VOL II. H h

they were settled in Harlem, they found means to form an acquaintance with one of the compositors, and succeeded by money and promises, in prevailing on him to procure a set of letters, and embark with them in the night for England. On their arrival, the Archbishop concluded that Oxford, would be a more convenient place for printing than London, and sent the compositor thither; but to prevent him leaving the place before he had discovered the whole secret, he was kept under the eye of a vigilant guard, until the art of printing was known at this university. This was a public spirited act, worthy of an English primate; but it would have reflected more to his honour, had it been undertaken entirely at his own expense.

John Morton, bishop of Ely, had greatly assisted Henry in ascending the throne; in return for which, he was rewarded with the primacy. The King was kept in continual alarm about the validity of his title to the crown, and the fear of his children not being acknowledged as heirs to the throne.

To secure his title, he applied, and obtained a bull from the Pope, to decree his children lawful heirs to the crown of England. But the Pope's bull amounted to very little with the partizans of the house of York, who made a vigorous attempt to de-

prive him of the throne. To enable him more effectually to crush his opponents, he procured a bull from the Pope, to limit the privileges of sanctuary, that he might deprive the disaffected of a shelter in which they might concert their rebellious projects. The purport of this bull was, "That if any sanctuary man did, by night or otherwise, get privily out of sanctuary, and commit mischief or trespass, and then come in again, he should lose the benefit of sanctuary for ever after.—That if the person of the man be protected in sanctuary from his creditors, his goods out of sanctuary should not.—That if any took sanctuary who were guilty of treason, the King might appoint keepers to watch over him there."—This abuse of churches to screen and protect the vilest characters, had long been complained of in England; and Henry wished to have it entirely suppressed, but the Pope would not allow more than the above qualifications.

The primate held a synod at London, February 13th, A.D. 1487, when complaints were made, that the preachers of the order of St. John of Jerusalem, declaimed in their sermons against the vices of the clergy, in the hearing of the laity, who were delighted at hearing the sins of the clergy exposed. The prior of St. John was brought before

the synod, and he promised to see the cause of complaint removed. But the conduct of the clergy, especially in the neighbourhood of London, was such as exposed them to general animadversion. In this synod, they were charged with spending their time in taverns and ale-houses,—of concealing their tonsure,—allowing their hair to grow long, and of imitating the laity in their dress. In this synod, a new holy-day was instituted, to commemorate the transfiguration of Christ, to be observed every year on the seventh of August.*

Soon after this synod closed its sittings, the primate published a pastoral letter for the reformation of the lives of the clergy. It is worthy of remark, that the primate neither reproves them for a single vice, nor recommends them to perform a single virtue. He charges them most solemnly, not to wear short *liripoops* of silk, nor gowns open before, and to lay aside their swords, daggers, and embroidered girdles; to be careful of their tonsure, and always keep their hair so short that the world may see their ears. He recommends all rectors and vicars who have only one living, to reside on their benefices, that they may preserve their flocks from the devil.†

* Wilkin, Con. tom. iii, p. 618. † Dr. Henry, vol. xii, p. 3.

The immoral lives of the clergy became so notorious, that the King, as Lord Bacon relates, ordained, that clerks convicted of certain crimes, should be burnt in the hand, that they might taste of some corporal punishment, and also carry a brand of infamy. Complaint was also made by the laity, to Pope Innocent VIII., who sent a bull to Archbishop Morton, dated March A. D. 1490, informing him that he had heard with great grief, from persons worthy of credit, that the monks of all the different orders in England, had most grievously degenerated ; that they had “ given themselves up to a “ reprobate sense ; they led lewd and dissolute lives, by which they brought ruin “ upon their own souls, set a bad example, “ to others, and gave great offence and “ scandal to many.” The Pope advised the primate to admonish the abbots and priors of all the convents in his province, and if that failed, he authorized him to visit them with ecclesiastical censures ; to cut off incurable members by deprivation, and if necessary to call in the secular arm to his assistance. This bull was accompanied with a red hat for Morton, appointing him cardinal ; the policy of which is apparent, the primate was prime minister, and a great favourite with the King ; to have a friend

in such a situation is important, as his Holiness knew that he might sometime be employed to his advantage.

In compliance with his instructions from Rome, and in virtue of his additional authority, the primate wrote to the abbot of St. Alban's, which letter hath been published. If that abbot and his monks, were guilty of the vices with which the primate charges them in his letter, they must have been a set of the most execrable wretches that ever disgraced human nature. Some of the crimes he charges them with, are of such a detestable character, that they cannot be named. Addressing the abbot, he says, " You are " infamous for simony, usury, and squander-
" ing away the possessions of your monastery,
" besides other enormous crimes mentioned
" below." One of these was, that he had turned all the modest women out of the two nunneries of Pray and Sapwell, over which he had exercised a jurisdiction, and filled them with prostitutes ; that they were esteemed no better than common brothels, and that he and his monks publicly frequented them as such. He also charges them with stealing the church plate, and of picking the jewels out of the shrine of their patron St. Alban. He reminds them, that they had been several times admonished be-

fore to no purpose ; and that he would only allow them sixty days in which to reform from all their vices, especially from cutting down the woods, and stealing the plate and jewels of the monastery ; but if they did not reform in that time, and become very chaste, honest, and good monks, he threatens them with a visitation.*

Whilst the Pope was employing the primitive to reform the abuses in the monasteries, he took care to make their reformation turn to his own temporal profit. His Holiness well knew, that when monastics lived in idleness, wallowed in wealth and luxury, and were doomed to celibacy; the temptations to certain vices were too strong to be overcome by monitory letters. The Pope saw this was a season he might turn to his own profit, and sent over as his agent, one John Giglis, an Italian, invested with power from the court of Rome, to grant on certain terms, a free and full "pardon for theft, debauchery, incontinence, and every kind of crime, except, assaulting the clergy, and factions against the Pope."†

The experiment succeeded beyond expectation, and such an immense sum of money did Giglis remit to the Pope, that he

* Henry, vol. xii, p. 8. Vide Wilkin. Concil. t. iii, p. 682

† Warner, vol. ii, p. 5. Bodin. Hist. Church, p. 137.

rewarded him with the rich bishoprick of Worcester, which was possessed by four Italians in succession.

The Pope empowered Archbishop Morton, to visit all those places which had been exempt from Archiepiscopal jurisdiction; and to dispense pardons where he saw just cause. About this time Rochester bridge was broken down, when the primate proclaimed remission from purgatory, for all sins committed within forty days, to all who contributed liberally to the re-building of the bridge.*

The promise made by Henry VII. when he ascended the throne, that he would never ask aids from the clergy but when in real need, was soon forgotten, and they found him not less avaricious than any of his predecessors; and the only way to secure his favour, was by being liberal in granting him money. A convocation was held in each of the provinces of Canterbury and York, A.D. 1491, when they each granted him a tenth of their livings for one year.†

The ruling passion in Henry, next to the love of money, was that of raising his family, so as to remove all scruple about their title to the throne, and thereby cut off all claim from the house of York. Henry VI., the last King of the house of Lancaster, was

* *Id. ibid.* † *Wilkin Council. t. iii, p. 634, 635.*

first buried in the abbey of Chertsey, to which great numbers of people resorted to witness the wonderful miracles said to be wrought at his tomb. To prevent this, Richard III. removed the body from Chertsey, and interred it in the collegiate church in the castle of Windsor, a place less accessible to the common people. In 1494, Henry presented a petition to the Pope, for permission to translate the remains of that pious King from Windsor to Westminster, where many of the Kings and Queens of England lay intombed. The dean and chapter of Windsor, powerfully opposed the translation; and so small was the authority of Kings, and so great was the authority of Popes over the ecclesiastics of those times, that this powerful King, had to apply to a foreign priest to overcome the resistance of his own chaplains.*

To add additional lustre to the house of Lancaster, Henry sent an ambassador to the Pope, to procure the canonization of King Henry VI. This request was accompanied with a long list of the wonderful miracles wrought by that pious prince, both in his lifetime and after his death; particularly, that he had given sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, strength to the lame, and had cured

* *Id.* *ibid.* Henry, vol. xii, p. 6.

all other diseases. The Pope seemed disposed to gratify the King in his request, and sent a commission to the cardinal Archbishop, and to Richard Fox, a great favourite of the King, whose translation he had just procured to Durham, to inquire into the sanctity of this royal candidate for canonization, and the reality of his miracles. This King was as unfortunate after his death, as he had been during life, for he never attained to the honour of being canonized, and the reason suggested by Cambden was, that the covetous Pope, demanded more money, than avaricious Henry was disposed to expend.

A. D. 1500, being the year of jubilee, great multitudes crowded to Rome from all parts, to partake of the pardons and indulgencies so profusely dispensed. To accommodate such as could not bear either the fatigue, or the expense of such a journey, the Pope sent his agents with an abundant supply of the spiritual treasures of the church, that the benefits of the jubilee might be enjoyed at home, by all who were disposed to purchase them. He sent as his agent into England, one Jasper Pons, a Spaniard, who executed his commission with so much address, that he disposed of his wares, and carried off a large sum of

money, without making much noise in the country.*

This year (1500) died Cardinal Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury, lord chancellor and prime minister to the King. He was succeeded in the see of Canterbury, by Henry Dean, bishop of Salisbury. Morton was a man of great abilities as a statesman, and was less violent in his measures, against those who held opinions contrary to those of the church of Rome, than several who sat in the same chair; though during his primacy, many had to pass through the fiery ordeal of martyrdom. Among those who were brought to the stake and burnt in Smithfield, were an old man, and Joan Boughton, a widow, eighty years of age, the mother of Lady Young, who also died a martyr; they both suffered for being heretics, A.D. 1494. In the year 1499, one Babram, a zealous martyr of Jesus Christ, was burnt to death in Norfolk.

Henry Dean, Archbishop of Canterbury, did not long enjoy the honours of the episcopacy, for he died A.D. 1502, and was succeeded by William Warham, bishop of London. Soon after the elevation of this prelate to the primacy, he made several regulations for his court of audience, and the court of

* Antiq. Britain, p. 832.

arches. Some of the advantages of these regulations were, that the judges of the court were required to assign advocates and proctors, to plead the causes of the poor gratis; and any advocate or proctor thus appointed, refusing to act, were to be disabled from ever practising in these courts.

Whilst King Henry VII. had his heart wholly set upon heaping up riches, a fatal disease falling upon his lungs, gave him warning of his near approach to another world. To recommend himself to the divine favour, and as a proof of his repentance, he ordered all the prisoners in and about London to be discharged, who were confined for debts and fees under forty shillings, the money to be paid out of the King's treasury. But so firmly were his affections fixed upon his gold, that the most solemn warnings, founded upon the certainty of a speedy dissolution, were not sufficient to induce him to stop the arbitrary extortions of his ministers, who were draining the purses of an oppressed people, to load his already overflowing coffers. He died April 22, A. D. 1509, at his palace at Richmond, leaving to his son upwards of eighteen hundred thousand pounds sterling in current coin. He was succeeded by his son Henry VIII. who was crowned, together with his Queen Catherine, at Westminster, June 25, A. D. 1509.

It is evident that avarice, and the love of wearing the crown of England, were the predominating passions in Henry's breast. He has been commended for his love of peace ; but he avoided military fame, because of the expense with which it is procured. He never performed one military act after the battle of Bosworth. He employed spies in every court of Europe, and to render them the more unsuspected, he had them solemnly cursed by name, every Sunday at St. Paul's Cross. This might be an act of court policy, but can any man but a jesui , make it a religious act ? His only public work which had any bearing on religion, was his fine chapel in Westminster Abbey, which was apparently, more to perpetuate his own, than the glory of God.— He has been much applauded for some good laws that were passed in his reign, but it will be seen that those laws emanated not from the prince, but the parliament, and he must have been a wretch indeed to have withheld his assent from them. In short, Henry VII. had so few virtues as a man, and so few good qualities as a prince, that he died hated or feared by all his people, and lamented by none.*

* Warner's Eccles. Hist., vol. ii, p. 11.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Remarks on the state of affairs on the accession of Henry VIII.—He marries his brother's widow.—Policy of Pope Julius II.—Cruelties inflicted on the Lollards.—Disputes between the Grey and Black Friars, about the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary.—An act of parliament passed, for the clergy to be tried for felony in the civil courts.—A violent commotion caused by the cruelty of the clergy towards Richard Hunne.—Violent proceedings against Dr. Standish and Dr. Vessey.—The clergy mortified by the King's decision.—Unmerciful proceedings against the Lollards.—Wolsey made bishop of Lincoln—Archbishop Bainbridge poisoned at Rome, and Wolsey promoted to York.—Made cardinal, and legate.—The sale of indulgencies exposed by Luther.—King Henry writes against him.—The Pope compliments Henry for his book.—Haughty behaviour of Wolsey towards Archbishop Wareham.—Causes which promoted the reformation.—Tindal translates the New Testament into English.—Tunstal, bishop of London, purchased all that could be found at Antwerp, and burnt them at Cheapside.—Anecdote of Constantine and Sir Thomas Moor.—Martyrdom of Thomas Bilney.—The King declares himself supreme head of the church.—Concluding remarks.

We are now entering upon the most interesting and momentous period of English ecclesiastical history;—a period, in which the church of England underwent a number of the most important changes; and what renders it the most remarkable is, those

changes were effected, not by the church, but by the state. At no period did the clergy, both secular and regular, appear more entirely devoted to the see of Rome, than at the accession of Henry VIII. This appears from the zeal with which they defended all the doctrines, rites, and ceremonies of the church, and the unrelenting cruelty with which they persecuted, even unto death, all who presumed to call the truth of any of them in question. The King had been inspired by his instructors with the highest veneration for the Pope, and with the most violent hatred against heresy and heretics; which continued during the first nineteen years of his reign.

Some of the circumstances connected with those ecclesiastical events, were altogether of a civil character, and more properly belong to the civil than to the ecclesiastical historian; but as they form the basis of that great revolution which took place in the church, it is necessary to notice them briefly in this place.

The first affair of moment, which had a bearing on these affairs was, the marriage of the King with Catharine of Spain, his brother Arthur's widow, for which, a dispensation had been obtained from the Pope. This marriage was powerfully opposed by

Archbishop Warham, as being incestuous, and contrary to the laws of God, with which, he said, the Pope could not dispense. The primate was opposed in his opinion by Fox, bishop of Winchester, secretary and lord privy seal, with a great majority of the council, who advised the King to the marriage by many strong political arguments; but no allusion was then made, of the protestation made by the King four years before against this contract, nor the injunction of his late father, never to carry it into execution. Henry, though it is said, reluctantly, complied with the advice of his council, and this extraordinary marriage was solemnized at Greenwich, June 7th, A.D. 1509. The events to which this marriage gave birth, were never calculated upon by its projectors. When the Pope granted the dispensation for this marriage, he doubtless intended thereby to subject Henry and his posterity for ever, to the see of Rome; because, the legality of his marriage, and the legitimacy of his offspring, would depend on the plenitude of the papal power. But the wise are sometimes taken in their own craftiness; and in this affair, the Pope has given proof, that with all his pretensions to infallibility, he could see no further into futurity than other men.

Pope Julius II. was one of the most restless, ambitious, and faithless men that ever disgraced human nature. Though he pretended to be the viceroy of the meek and peaceful Saviour, yet during his whole pontificate, he acted the part of a firebrand, by practising every art he could devise to kindle and keep alive the flames of war. As a mark of his paternal regard for the King, he sent him a consecrated rose of gold dipped in chrism, and perfumed with musk, which Archbishop Warham was to present to the King at high mass, with his apostolic benediction; both which were received by the King with profound reverence and excessive joy.* But the King had a more valuable present made this year, A. D. 1511, by the convocation of the province of Canterbury, which granted him a subsidy of twenty-five thousand pounds.

The cruelties inflicted upon the Lollards at this period, were of a most severe kind. Those who escaped the flames by abjuration, were compelled to wear the form of a faggot on the sleeve, either wrought with thread, or painted, as long as they lived, on pain of death. If any one put off this badge they must be burnt, if they kept it on they must starve, as none would employ them whilst

* Wilkin. Council. tom. iii, p. 583.

they wore it. The rigid severity with which the laying aside this badge was punished, is seen in the cases of William Sweeting, and James Brewster. They were first re-imprisoned, and on their trials, Brewster pleaded, that he was commanded to lay aside his badge, by the comptroller of the Earl of Oxford's house; and Sweeting pleaded, that the parson of Mary Magdalen's church in Colchester, caused him to lay his faggot aside. But neither of these pleas had any weight with their merciless judges, for they were both burnt together in Smithfield, A.D. 1511.

Though the bishops were all of one mind about persecuting the Lollards, they were far from being unanimous on another subject. The bishops and the officers of their courts, had derived great profit from the registration and probation of testaments, the administration of the goods of intestates, and the trial of causes in their several courts; but the most violent disputes now arose between the primate and his suffragans, about the division of these profits. Formerly, all these subjects were settled in the court of the diocese wherein they occurred. But the late Archbishop Morton, had employed all his great power, as chancellor and prime-minister, in making encroachments on the

privileges and emoluments of the bishops and their courts; and bringing almost all litigations into his own court, to which he gave the new name of prerogative court. These innovations were opposed by the bishops, and by none so warmly as William Warham, who acted as advocate to the bishop of London, who appealed against them to the Pope. But when Warham was advanced to the primacy, he carried these encroachments farther than any of his predecessors had done, and rejected all propositions for an accommodation, which led to a long and violent contest.*

This period was marked with another division in the church, between the Franciscans, or grey friars, and the Dominicans, or black friars, about the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary; which the former maintained, and the latter denied. There was so much importance attached to this question, that it engaged the attention of the christian world for several years. It was at last decided by a decree of the Pope, who pronounced in favour of the Franciscans; on which a new festival was instituted, to commemorate the immaculate conception of the Holy Virgin, and all who denied it were declared to be heretics.*

* Wilkin Concil. t. iii, p. 653—659. † Fox, vol. ii, p. 732.

About this time one John Brown, of Ashford, in Kent, who had been sentenced to wear a faggot in the reign of the late King, was condemned by Archbishop Warham, who, to compel him to deny the truth, caused his feet to be burned to the bones, but still holding fast his profession, he was burned at the stake in Ashford.

A law which was revived in the early part of the reign of Henry VIII., exempting the clergy from the jurisdiction of the civil courts, became a bone of contention between the clergy and laity, and involved both in great trouble. The laity got an act of parliament passed A.D. 1512, by which all the clergy who were accused of murder, or robbery were to be tried in the civil courts, except bishops, priests, and deacons; and if found guilty, were to be denied the benefit of clergy.† This act was violently opposed by the clergy, as a most impious invasion of the immunities of the church, as by it, all the inferior orders of clergy were liable to be hanged, if found guilty of either murder or robbery. Loud declamations were heard in every direction against this act; the abbot of Winchelcomb, in a sermon that he preached at St. Paul's cross, affirmed, "that the act was contrary to the laws of God and

† Statutes, 4 Henry viii, c. 2.

the liberties of the church, and that all who assented to it, whether spiritual or temporal, had incurred the censures of the church." The abbot also published a book, to prove that the persons of the lower, as well as the higher orders of the clergy were sacred, and could not be tried and punished by the laity for any crimes.* This open attack made at a time when the parliament was sitting, roused both the Lords and Commons, who addressed the King, praying him to prevent the clergy from emancipating themselves from the restraints of the law, and compel them to retract the opinions they had published. In answer to the prayer of the petition, the King had the case solemnly argued before himself and the bench of judges. The abbot of Winchelcomb was advocate for the immunities of the clergy; and Dr. Standish, one of the King's spiritual council, pleaded against them, the justice and expedience of the act. Without entering into the whole of this long debate, the King and all the lay part of the assembly were satisfied that Dr. Standish had the right side of the argument, and requested the bishops to compel the abbot to recant his opinion. This they positively refused, declaring, that what he had advanced was not only their

* Vide Burnet's Hist. Reformation.

opinion, but the doctrine of holy church.* Thus the affair closed for the present, but was resumed again, as we shall notice in its place.

Whilst the disputes between the clergy and laity were hanging in suspence, the attention of both parties, especially about London, was arrested by the following circumstances. One Richard Hunne, a wealthy citizen of London, was sued by the priest of his parish in the legate's court, for a mortuary, which he pretended was due to him for the burial of his infant child. Hunne, by the advice of his council, sued him in the King's bench, in a premunire, for bringing him before a foreign court. To extricate the priest, Hunne was accused of heresy, and imprisoned in the Lollard's Tower at St. Paul's. From this prison he never returned, for he was found hanging in the prison December 4th, A. D. 1514. The clergy published a report that he hanged himself; but nobody gave it credit; and the coroner's inquest, after a careful examination of the body, the posture in which it was found, and other circumstances, brought in their verdict, "Wilful murder by those who had the charge of the prison." Many witnesses were examined, whose

* Henry, vol. xii, p. 15.

evidence tended to criminate the bishop's, Sumner, and the bell-ringer; and Sumner afterwards confessed that the chancellor Doctor Horsey, himself, and the bell-ringer, had first murdered Hunne, and then hung up his body against the wall.*

The circulation in London, of the verdict brought in by the coroner's jury, excited the most violent indignation against the clergy; especially, from the unwarrantable means by which they attempted to hide their guilt. The bishop of London, in concert with some other prelates, concluded, that the only way to prevent the people from espousing the cause of Hunne, was to convict him of heresy. The preliminary arrangements being made, the bishop of London convened a numerous assemblage of bishops, abbots, priors, and doctors, with a great number of the inferior clergy, to a court which he held at St. Paul's, December 16th, to try a man for heresy, who had laid in his grave ten days already.

The court being sat, Richard Hunne was accused of holding certain heresies, said to be contained in the preface to Wickliffe's bible, which had been found in his house, and was considered sufficient evidence, that he had held all these heresies. Proclamation

* Henry, vol. xii, p. 15. Vide Burnet's Hist. Reform. & Fox's Acts.

was then made, that if any one was prepared to answer for the accused, he must appear immediately. But as no counsel chose to plead the cause of such a client before such a court, Hunne was pronounced a heretic; his body was taken up December 20th, A.D. 1514, and burnt in Smithfield.*

Such a violent outrage on every principle of humanity as this horrid spectacle presented, when brought before the public by their spiritual guides, excited a general dissatisfaction, which was not confined to the people of London. A general outcry was raised against the cruelty of the clergy.—That an honest man for suing a priest according to law, should contrary to law be cast into prison,—be murdered there,—and then take his body out of the grave and burn it, that they might load his memory with infamy, and ruin his family, were such a complication of cruelties, as few barbarians had ever been guilty of.

The parliament met on February 5th. A. D. 1515, and a bill was sent up by the Commons, for restoring Hunne's children to all their father's effects, which was passed. On the third of April, the Commons sent another bill to the house of Lords, for bringing the murderers of Hunne, particularly

* Burnet's Hist. Reform., vol. i, p. 20.

Doctor Horsey to justice. But the bishop of London made a violent declamation against it, affirming that Hunne had hanged himself;—that the coroner and his jury were perjured caitiffs;—that if the bill passed he could not keep his house open for heretics,—on which the bill was thrown out after the first reading.*

The conduct of Doctor Standish, in pleading against the liberties of the church, raised him up a host of enemies among his brethren the clergy, who brought him before the convocation, which sat at the same time with the parliament. The doctor knew the men he had to meet, and might expect any thing from them but either mercy or justice; he therefore claimed the King's protection, as he had incurred their displeasure by acting as his spiritual counsel. The clergy assured the King, that they did not intend to question the Doctor for any thing he had said at the late conference; but for certain lectures he delivered at St. Paul's, in which he had advanced many things contrary to the law of God and the liberties of holy church, which they were bound to maintain; which duty was also binding on the King by his coronation oath. On the other hand, both houses of parliament petitioned the

* Burnet's Hist. Reform. vol. i. p. 20.

King to preserve the undoubted rights of his crown, and maintain his temporal jurisdiction over all his subjects, and to protect Doctor Standish from the malice of his enemies.

The excited state of the public mind, placed the King in a critical situation. He was afraid of the consequences that might follow, if he had a rupture with the clergy; at the same time he was very tenacious of his own rights. On this occasion he consulted Doctor Veysey, dean of his chapel, and charged him upon his allegiance, to give him his real sentiments on this important question. The Doctor having taken some time to consider the subject, told the King upon his faith and conscience, that the trial of clerks by the secular judges, for crimes committed against the laws of the land, was neither contrary to the law of God, nor inconsistent with the true liberties of the church. The doctor's opinion, and the arguments with which he supported it, was quite satisfactory to the King; who commanded all the judges, and members of his council, both spiritual and temporal, to meet at Blackfriars, where the question should be fully and deliberately considered.

The clergy preferred a bill against Doctor Standish, which consisted of six articles.

“ First, that he had said that the lower orders were not sacred. Secondly, that the exemption of clerks was not founded on a divine right. Thirdly, that the laity might coerce clerks, when the prelates did not do their duty. Fourthly, that no positive ecclesiastical law binds any but those who receive it. Fifthly, that the study of the canon law was needless. Sixthly, that of the whole volume of the Decretum, so much as a man could hold in his fist, and no more, did oblige Christians.* To these articles the Doctor replied, that what was contained in the third, fifth, and sixth articles, he had never taught them, nor, to his remembrance, had ever asserted what implied them in private discourse. To the first he said, lesser orders in one sense are sacred, and in another, they are not. The second and fourth, he confessed he had taught them, and was ready to justify them. The priests objected, that by the law of God, no man could judge his father, it being contrary to that command. “ Honour thy father :” so the clergy being spiritual fathers, they cannot be judged by the laity, who were their children. The doctor remarked, that their objection could only be applicable to priests, the inferior orders not being fathers ; so it was a mistake to say a

* Burnet's Hist. Reform., vol. i, p. 21.

judge might now sit upon his natural father; for though the command is general, there are exceptions. It is also said, "Thou shalt not kill," yet in some cases we may lawfully kill; so in the case of justice a judge may lawfully sit on his father.

Doctor Veysey remarked, that the laws of the church did not bind any but those who received them. In proof of this, he said, formerly all priests were allowed to marry; but in the days of St. Augustine, a decree was made to the contrary, which was received in England, consequently the priests in England are not allowed to marry. But this law was rejected by the Greek church, and her priests are allowed to marry. If the churches in the east are not condemned for violating a law they did not receive; then the trying of clerks by the civil power can be no sin, because the decree to the contrary was never received here.

When the matter had been fairly argued on both sides, the judges gave it as their opinion, "That all those of the convocation, who did award the citation against Standish, were in the case of a *premunire facias*," and thus the court broke up.

Soon after, the King summoned all the lords, spiritual and temporal, several of the house of Commons, all the judges, and the

King's counsel, to meet him at Baynard's Castle. When this august assembly was met, Cardinal Wolsey fell upon his knees before the King, and in the name of the clergy, earnestly entreated him "to avoid the censures of the church, to defer the matter to the decision of the Pope and his council, at the court of Rome." The King, in reply, said, "It seems to us, that Doctor Standish, and others of our spiritual council, have answered you fully in all points.

The Lord Chief Justice, Fineux, observed, that as there was no law by which bishops could judge clerks for felony, that they must either be tried in the civil courts, or be allowed to commit the greatest crimes with impunity. No reply being made to this, the King said, "By the permission and ordinance of God, we are King of England; and the Kings of England in times past, owned no superior, but God. Therefore know you well, that we will maintain the right of our crown, and of our temporal jurisdiction, as well in this as in all other points, in as ample manner as any of our progenitors have done before our time."* This royal declaration alarmed the Archbishop of Canterbury, who fell on his knees, and begged that the final determination of

* Burnet's Hist. Reformation, vol. i, p. 23.

this question might be delayed till they had time to consult the court of Rome. To this the King made no reply ; but immediately retired, and the conference broke up.

On a warrant being issued for apprehending Dr. Horsey, the bishop of London's chancellor, in order to his being tried in the King's bench for the murder of Richard Hunne, he absconded, and concealed himself in the Archbishop's palace at Lambeth. At last, the bishop of London, through the intercession of Cardinal Wolsey, got the matter compromised on the following terms. That Horsey should be placed at the bar at the King's bench ;—that on his pleading not guilty, the Attorney-general should acknowledge the truth of this plea, and dismiss him without a trial,—and that all proceedings against Dr. Standish be dismissed out of the court of convocation.*

In those days of papal tyranny, it was thought no small triumph, for the greatest King in Europe, to have brought a priest to the bar, though he did not bring him to trial. This affair had a powerful effect on the public mind, as will be seen in the subsequent changes. The clergy lost their reputation with the people, who involved them all in the guilt of Hunne's murder. The

* Burnet, vol. i, p. 24.

citizens of London were not at all satisfied with the proceedings in the court of King's bench; and gave strong intimations, that the King was more careful to preserve his prerogative, than to do justice to his subjects.

Whatever difference of opinion prevailed among the clergy on other subjects, there was one subject on which they seem unhappily, to have been unanimous, the persecution of the Lollards; in which they were too well supported by the civil authorities. The infernal spirit of persecution raged with great violence, during the first nineteen years of this reign. Though Henry VIII. was very tenacious for the rights of his crown, he had no regard to the rights of conscience, and no mercy on those whose private judgment in matters of religion, differed in the least from the established system of faith and worship. It would far exceed our proposed limits, to give a detailed account of all the horrid cruelties inflicted on those who were found guilty of reading the scriptures,—denying transubstantiation,—purgatory,—the worship of images,—invocation of saints,—and the infallibility of the Pope, &c. All who were then convicted of what they called heresy, whether men or women, old or young, if they adhered to their opinions, were condemned as obstinate heretics, and

burnt to ashes. For the names, trials, and sufferings of those who at this time sealed the truth with their blood, we must refer the reader to Fox's Martyrology. Judging from the zealous efforts of some of the English prelates, they were determined to extirpate heretics, and purify the land from heresy with their blood. But their violent measures produced a re-action ; for the fiercer the persecution raged, the greater was the sympathy of the people for the sufferers, and the higher their indignation rose against their persecutors.

About this time, Wolsey was nominated by the King to the see of Lincoln, which was confirmed by a provisionary bull from the Pope. But Wolsey had scarcely got invested with his episcopal power, before a circumstance occurred, which opened the door for his further advancement. Cardinal Bainbridge, Archbishop of York, was at Rome, and had for his steward, one Rivaldus de Modena, an Italian. The Cardinal was so highly offended at the conduct of his steward, that he administered a seasonable portion of corporeal punishment ; the effect of which was, that in a few days after the Archbishop was found poisoned. The death of Bainbridge left the see of York vacant, to which Wolsey was translated, and soon after,

as a compliment to the King, his Holiness sent him a red hat, which produced the effect the infallible pontiff intended; of engaging the prelate and his master on the side of the Pope against the Turks.

Whilst both the clergy and laity were endeavouring to ward off the tyrannical power of the Pope, they found it more difficult to withstand Wolsey's arbitrary proceedings, as he was supported by the King in all his measures. The Archbishop of Canterbury was so mortified at the contempt with which Wolsey treated him, that he desired leave of the King to resign his office as chancellor, and retire from court. The primate's request was immediately granted, and the same day the great seal was delivered to Wolsey. All the cardinal now wanted, was a commission from the Pope to be *legate a latere*, with which he was soon after gratified.

The Pope, to enable him to prosecute his war against the Turks, opened a general mart for indulgencies; the benefit of which was to extend to the dead, whose souls on the payment of so much money, was to be released immediately out of purgatory. The scandalous manner in which these indulgencies were disposed of by some of the Pope's agents, roused the spirit of Martin Luther, an Augustine Friar, and professor

of divinity at Wirtemberg, who published some severe pieces of satire upon them, shewing that they had no foundation in the scriptures. The lewd and profligate lives of the Popish clergy, had rendered them objects of contempt and hatred by the people, who were eager to see, and predisposed to receive the doctrines of Luther, some of which soon found their way into England, and were cordially received by a people whose minds had been previously prepared by the writings of Wickliffe.

Henry VIII., who had already drawn his sword in defence of the church, now took up his pen to oppose this German Reformer, and wrote his *de Septem Sacramentis*. The King sent a splendid copy of his work to the Pope, and was delivered to him in full consistory, October, A. D. 1521, by Dr. John Clark, dean of Windsor, which his Holiness received with great respect and ceremony. As a reward for this royal performance, his Holiness by a bull, bestowed on Henry the title of Defender of the Faith. After extolling the book as a most wonderful performance, he returns thanks to Almighty God, who had been graciously pleased to inspire his Majesty's excellent mind, always inclined to that which is good, with so much grace from Heaven.* So great a fa-

* Henry, vol. xii, p. 21, from Collier, Records, vol. 2, No. iv.

avourite was Henry now at the court of Rome, that had he died at this time, no doubt can be entertained of his canonization.

The conduct of Cardinal Wolsey towards his patron, Archbishop Warham, was on many occasions highly reprehensible. The Archbishop had summoned a convocation of the prelates and clergy of his province to meet at St. Paul's, April 23d, A.D. 1523, and Wolsey summoned a convocation of his province of York to meet at the same time at Westminster. But as soon as the convocation of Canterbury had met, and were about to proceed to business, the Cardinal summoned them to attend him, April 22d, in a legantine council at Westminster. This summons was not more unexpected, than it was offensive to the prelates and clergy of the province of Canterbury. In compliance with the Cardinal's summons, they attended; but when they came to treat on business, the proctors for the clergy observed, that their commissions gave them no authority to treat or vote but in convocation. This unanswerable objection, was a mortifying stroke to the Cardinal's pride, who, finding that he had stretched his legantine authority too far, was under the necessity of dismissing his council. The convocation of Canterbury returned to St. Paul's, and granted the King

one-half of all their benefices for one year, to be paid in five years, as a reward for the great services he had done the church, "by his most learned book." The same subsidy was granted the King by the province of York.*

At no former period, had the clergy manifested more zeal for the extirpation of heresy, which they called "the damnable vice." The definable parts of this vice, consisted in reading the New Testament in English,—the works of Wickliffe and Luther;—in denying the infallibility of the Pope, transubstantiation, purgatory, praying to saints, worshiping images, &c.&c. But the greater the severities inflicted on those who held the above opinions, the more rapidly they spread, especially in London, and some parts of Essex; where they called themselves *the Brethren in Christ*. They met in the most private manner in each other's houses to read the scriptures, and other prohibited books, and to converse on religious subjects. Several of them were apprehended, and brought before Tunstal, bishop of London, who being a man of great humanity, and not willing to stain his hands with blood, he prevailed upon them to renounce, or rather, to dissemble their opinions, by which they

* Wilkin. Concil. tom. iii, p. 698, 699.

escaped a painful death, but incurred the reproaches of their own minds. But Longland, bishop of Lincoln, made use of other arguments. He was very cruel to all that were even suspected of heresy; put them to various kinds of punishment, and several were burnt alive in his province.*

The violent commotion between the different powers on the continent, was severely felt by his Holiness, who was kept close prisoner by the Emperor. The Pope appointed Wolsey his vicar-general, investing him with all the power of the papacy. Having obtained the power, though not the name of Pope, he ruled the church with the most despotic sway, and encroached on the most undisputed rights of the other bishops, as well as the laity. He established a court in his own house, called York-house, for all testamentary matters, which almost annihilated both the business and emoluments of the prerogative court, of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Archbishop remonstrated against these innovations in very respectful terms, but the haughty vicar-general paid no attention to them, till he received a message from the King, to whom alone he paid some deference.†

* Burnet's Hist. Reform., vol. i, p. 42. Strype, 6, ch. 7, 8.

† Id. *ibid.*

Perhaps never monarch ranked higher in the estimation of the court of Rome, than Henry VIII. did up to this period, A.D. 1528. He was loaded with the most extravagant praises, dignified with the title of Defender of the Faith, and honoured with the precious presents of consecrated swords, capes, and roses. But the honours heaped on Henry by the Pope, were not like what the church of Rome professes to be, "unchanged and unchangeable;" for in a short time, he who had been dub'd "Defender of the Faith," was by the Pope and his Cardinals, loaded with curses, and represented as being worse than Judas, Caiaphas, or Pilate, and the greatest enemy to God and holy church that ever appeared. At last his Holiness thundered out against him the dreadful sentence of excommunication; gave him up to the devil, absolved his subjects from their allegiance, and commanded them to depose him. He enjoined all Christian princes to declare war against him; gave them a right to seize all his dominions, and every thing that belonged to him.*

These amazing changes, were not the effect of a momentary passion on the part of either the Pope or the prince; but rose out of a combination of widely different causes,

* Henry, vol. xii, p. 28, from Strye, ch. 43. Wilkin, t. 3, p. 792.

partly in the church, and partly in the state, which we shall endeavour distinctly to notice. First on the part of the church. We have frequently had to remark on the gross ignorance and immoral lives of the generality of the clergy, who were hated by the laity for their riches, pride, and rapacity; and the cruel manner in which they treated all who dared to call in question the truth of any of the doctrines, or ceremonies of the church of Rome. The revival of religion among the Lollards, had given birth to a number of small books, against the authority of the Pope, transubstantiation, purgatory, pardons, and pilgrimages, &c. The recent invention of printing gave great facility to their circulation; and neither the prohibitions, nor penalties, could prevent the people from perusing them with avidity. The clergy were aware of their danger from this quarter, and did all in their power to prevent the people from reading, especially, the New Testament in English, which they represented as perfect poison to the souls of Christians. But the more carefully the people perused the scriptures, the more clearly they saw, that many of the doctrines and ceremonies of the church of Rome, had no foundation in the New Testament, and that the Pope and his clergy, were in their lives, the reverse of the

Apostles, from whom they professed to derive their authority. The general disaffection of the laity towards the church and clergy was so great, that the ponderous fabric would have fallen by its own weight, had it not been supported by the zealous efforts of this powerful "Defender of the Faith." What led him to withdraw his support, and the effects which followed, we shall notice.

It has been already stated, that Henry was married by contract to his brother Arthur's widow, Catharine of Spain, when he was not more than twelve years of age. To render this valid, a bull was obtained from the Pope, dated December 26th, 1503. But the very day that Henry came of age, he made a protestation against it before a public notary, dated June 27th, 1505, by which he declared, "That whereas he being under age, was married to the princess Catharine; yet now, coming to be of age, he did not confirm that marriage, but retracted and annulled it, and would not proceed in it, but intended in full form of law to void it, and break it off; which he declared he did freely of his own accord."*

In this state, matters stood till the death of his father, who, when on his death-bed,

* Burnet's Hist. Reform. vol. i. p. 47.

advised his son to break it off, probably through fear of the troubles that might follow on a controverted title to the crown. The first subject of consultation on the accession of Henry VIII. was, about his marriage, which he must either confirm or annul. Many arguments were advanced on both sides, but those in favour of it seems to have prevailed, for six weeks after he came to the crown, he was married again publicly, June 3d, 1509, and lived in great conjugal harmony for eighteen years. The Queen bore him several children, all of whom died in their infancy but Lady Mary, who was declared princess of Wales. Henry projected several matches for Mary, all which were broken off; the last was with Francis King of France, either for himself, or his second son, the Duke of Orleans. Whilst this negotiation was on hand, the French Ambassador, the bishop of Tarbe, made a great demur about Mary being illegitimate, as begotten in a marriage that was contracted against a divine precept, with which no human authority could dispense.

What influence court policy might have in the above objections, it is hard to say, but it is certain that about this time, Henry first disclosed his doubts to his confessor Longland, bishop of Lincoln, Cardinal Wolsey,

and some others. Having studied the subject with great attention, and consulted many of the most learned men in his dominions, he at last professed to be fully convinced, that his marriage was incestuous, and contrary to the laws of God and nature; and that the Pope could not dispense with these laws. Under this conviction, he resolved to apply to the Pope for a divorce, that he might be at liberty to contract a more unexceptionable marriage. Our limits will not allow us to enter into all the delays, artifices, and double-dealings of the court of Rome, in the affair of the divorce; which at length provoked the King to withdraw his obedience to the Pope, and assume the supremacy in his own dominions. This step led to the important changes that followed in the church and state of England. The Pope and Cardinals, could not imagine that Henry was sincere in his threatenings, having proved himself such a champion for the church, and was so proud of the honours he had received for fighting her battles; and consequently produced nothing but fresh delays and disappointments. But the conduct of the King and parliament, which met November 5th, A.D. 1529, was sufficient to convince the Pope, that the King was in earnest, and his subjects were ready to sup-

port him in executing his purposes. The iniquitous conduct of the spiritual court, in their exorbitant exactions in the probates of wills, and the parish priests in demanding mortuaries, that, together with their cruelty towards those who were called heretics, they were generally disliked by the laity of all ranks.

The following year, 1530, the house of Lords wrote a spirited letter to the Pope, accusing him of ingratitude and injustice to their sovereign, in not granting him the divorce, after it had been pronounced just and necessary by the most learned men, and noted universities in Europe. In conclusion, they declared that if his Holiness refused or delayed to grant their just request, they would seek and find relief some other way.* This letter, though signed by twenty-eight spiritual and forty-two temporal lords, failed to produce the desired effects. The Pope's reply was couched in smooth and artful terms; in which he assigns as his reason for not granting the King's request; that the Queen having appealed to the Apostolical tribunal, he could not refuse to admit her appeal without injustice. To the concluding paragraph in their letter, in which they threatened his Holiness, that if he refused

* Henry, from Herbert, p. 141.

their request, they would seek relief elsewhere, he replied, "As for what you mention in the end of your letter, that unless we grant your request, herein you shall imagine that the care of yourselves is committed into your own hands, and that you are at liberty to seek a remedy elsewhere: this is a resolution neither worthy of your prudence, nor becoming your christianity; and we therefore, of our fatherly love, exhort you to abstain from any such rash attempt."*

Whilst the conduct of the court of Rome in the affair of the divorce, was disposing the King to cast off his obedience to the Pope, divine providence was employing other means to prepare the minds of the people for what followed. To avoid the cruelties inflicted by the clergy on all who were suspected of heresy, many of the English fled to the continent, where the reformers were protected, and employed themselves in writing and publishing books, chiefly against the corruptions of the clergy, pilgrimages, worshiping images, saints, and relics, &c. &c. But the book which produced the most powerful effect was, Tindal's translation of the New Testament, of which the bishop's made many complaints, and condemned it for being

* Herbert, p. 145.

full of errors. Tonsal, bishop of London, employed one Packington, an English merchant, to purchase at Antwerp, all the copies he could find of Tindal's translation of the New Testament, for which the bishop paid the full price ; and on their arrival, burnt them publicly in Cheapside. This produced a two-fold effect, which its promoters never contemplated. This publicly burning the word of God, was considered such an act of impiety, that the people concluded, there must be something in the doctrines and conduct of the clergy different from what was contained in that book, or they would never dare to treat it in such a manner. This excited a more intense desire to peruse it for themselves. But this conduct of the bishop produced another happy effect. Tindal was aware of some mistakes that had not been corrected in his first edition, and had prepared a new and more correct one, but for want of money, could not put it to press ; but he was relieved from this embarrassment by the bishop of London's purchase. The following year when the new edition was out, a great number of them were brought over to England by one Constantine, who was apprehended and brought before the lord chancellor. In a private examination, the chancellor pro-

mised him his protection, if he would reveal who encouraged and supported them at Antwerp. Being assured that the chancellor was in earnest, he told him, that the greatest encouragement they had, was from the bishop of London, who had bought up half of the former edition. The chancellor kept his word, and gave Constantine his liberty, though the laugh was turned against both him and the bishop.

The most violent means were used by the persecuting clergy, to prevent the spread of the truth which they termed heresy. Many both men and women were imprisoned and put to various kinds of torture, and several sealed the truth with their blood. Among these were Thomas Hitton, curate of Maidstone, who was burnt to ashes for bringing over books from Antwerp. Also Thomas Bilney, who when first taken abjured, and returned to his studies at Cambridge, where he suffered all the pungent accusations of an awakened guilty conscience. Having sought pardon for his past offence, he again obtained his peace of mind, and having pursued his studies with great diligence for the space of two years, he resolved to expiate his abjuration by a public and solemn confession of the truth. He took leave of his friends at Cambridge, and went into Norfolk,

where he preached up and down the country, confessing his sin in having denied the faith at his abjuration. He earnestly exhorted the people to beware of idolatry ;—of praying to images, or saints ;—not to trust in pilgrimages, but to stay at home, and put their trust in Jesus Christ alone for mercy and salvation. This preaching excited considerable attention, and he was soon seized by the bishop's officers, and put in prison at Norwich. A writ was sent to burn him as a relapsed heretic, with which he was not surprised, and often repeated that passage in Isaiah, "When thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burnt ;" and putting his finger in the flame of the candle, he told them about him that he well knew burning was a severe pain, but that it should only consume the stubble of his body. When brought to the stake, he repeated the creed, to shew the people that he died in the faith of the apostles. He also prayed with great fervor, and then repeated the 143d Psalm, and paused on these words, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." He took leave of his friend, Dr. Warner, with a cheerful countenance, and exhorted him to feed his flock, that at his Lord's coming he might find him so doing. The

fire was then kindled, and his body was consumed to ashes, November 11th, A.D. 1530.

The King having got the sense of both houses of parliament,—the convocation,—several universities, and a number of learned men, on the subject of a divorce ; and finding a great majority to be, that the marriage was contrary to the laws of God and nature, and that the Pope could not dispense with these laws ; and having been so frequently provoked by the double-dealing of the Pope, he at once cut off all connexion with the see of Rome, and assumed the title of supreme head of the church of England. This was certainly a bold stroke, which would not have been attempted by a man of less nerve than Henry VIII. ; nor are we surprised that it should stagger some of the conscientious clergy. There was one circumstance greatly in the King's favour, and removed many difficulties out of the way, with that body of his subjects. The clergy were under a premunire, and at a convocation of the province of Canterbury, they petitioned the King for a pardon.—Thomas Cromwell, and others of the privy council, assured the clergy, that whatever their petition was, it would be rejected, if they did not in it acknowledge the King's supremacy. This settled the point ; for

those who under other circumstances would have opposed, to avoid the penalties of a *premunire*, silently acquiesced. Both the clergy and laity in the north were less pliant than those in the south ; for the clergy in the convocation of York were so biggoted, that they refused giving the King this title, until they found they could not obtain their pardon on any other terms.*

The King did not intend this to be an insignificant empty title, for at the next session of parliament, A. D. 1532, he had all the annats or first fruits, transferred from the Pope to himself. This was a severe blow to the Pope, but it was only a prelude to what followed. After a little reflection, some of the clergy began to dread the effects of an entire breach with Rome, as it would subject them in all things, to the laws of their country in common with the laity. The Archbishop of Canterbury, when he perceived how the tide of opposition was running against the Pope and church in the house of Commons, protested before a notary, public, and three witnesses, February 24th, 1532, in his palace at Lambeth, against all the laws that had been made, or that should hereafter be made, by the present parliament, derogatory of the authority

* Henry, from Burnet, p. 112.

of the Pope, or the rights and immunities of the church.*

A petition was presented to the King from the house of Commons, complaining that the clergy harrassed the laity by vexatious prosecutions in the spiritual courts;—that they made and executed laws and canons without the royal assent;—and that some of these canons were contrary to the laws of the land. The King sent this complaint to the convocation that was then sitting, and commanded them to return an answer. In their wily answer they affirm, that their spiritual jurisdiction was exercised with the greatest lenity, except “upon certain evil-disposed persons, infected and utterly corrupt with the pestilent poison of heresy, and to have peace with such, is against the gospel of our Saviour Christ.” In their answer to the second article of complaint, they boldly assert, “We take our authority of making laws to be grounded upon the Scriptures of God, and determination of holy church.” They also added, “We may not submit the execution of our charge and duty, certainly prescribed by God, to your Highness’s assent, though in very deed the same be most worthy.” With regard to the inconsistency which the Commons said there was between

* Wilkin, p. 145.

the laws of the land, and the canons of the church, they observed, that as the canons were made by the authority, and were perfectly agreeable to the will of God, it would be proper for his Grace and the parliament to change their laws, and bring them to a perfect conformity to those of the church.*

The answer of the convocation was far from being satisfactory to the King, who immediately returned them two propositions, to which he demanded their assent:

“ 1. That no constitution or ordinance shall
“ be hereafter by the clergy enacted, promulgated, or put in execution, unless the
“ King’s Highness do approve the same by
“ his high authority and royal assent. 2.
“ That whereas divers of the constitutions
“ provincial, which have been heretofore
“ enacted, be thought not only much prejudicial to the King’s prerogative, but
“ also much onerous† to his Highness’s subjects, to be committed to the examination
“ and judgment of thirty-two persons;
“ whereof sixteen to be of the upper and
“ lower house of the temporality, and other
“ sixteen of the clergy; all to be appointed
“ by the King’s Highness; so that finally,
“ whichsoever of the said constitutions shall

* Henry, from Wilkin, p. 750. † An obsolete word, meaning burdensome, oppressive, &c.

“ be thought and determined by the most
“ part of the said thirty-two persons worthy
“ to be abrogate and annulled, the same to
“ be afterwards taken away, and to be of no
“ force or strength.”

The receipt of these propositions threw the convocation into the greatest confusion and alarm. They were thunder-struck at the idea of having the sacred canons of the church, examined and repealed by laymen; and in order to ward off the stroke in the best manner they could, they proposed to submit all their canons to the examination of the King alone: “ Having (as they said) “ especial trust and confidence in your most “ high and excellent wisdom, your princely “ goodness, and fervent zeal to the promo- “ tion of God’s honour and the Christian reli- “ gion, and especially your incomparable “ learning, far exceeding in our judgment, “ the learning of all other Kings and princes “ that we have read of.”

Though Henry was both proud of his learning, and fond of flattery, yet these high compliments could not prevail on him to make any alteration in the propositions, and the convocation was obliged to give their assent to them as they stood. When the deputation which carried their proposition was introduced to the King, he told them

that he thought the clergy of the realm had been wholly his subjects ; but on examination, he found that they were more the subjects of another sovereign than his. He then presented them with the oath which the prelates have to take at their consecration, by which they become more the subjects of the Pope than of the King. The King sent the two oaths by the speaker, who read them in the house, but the parliament breaking up on account of the plague, nothing more was done about the oaths at that time.

On the breaking up of this parliament, Sir T. Moor, the lord chancellor, obtained leave of the King to resign his office. He had willingly concurred in the statutes of premunire ; being desirous of cutting off the illegal jurisdiction which the Popes had exercised in England ; but he could not make up his mind to go to those lengths which he saw the court intended. Few men, either before his day or since, have discharged the duties of that high office with more credit to themselves than he did. That he did not hold office for the sake of its emoluments is clear, for on his resignation, he was incapable of defraying the necessary expenses of his private family.

Whilst the contest was at its height between the King and the court of Rome,

Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, died in the month of August, A.D. 1532. He is said to have been a man of extensive learning, uncommon prudence, and great command of temper, which he had frequent opportunities of exercising. His severity in prosecuting those he considered guilty of heresy, was the greatest blemish in his character. But it should be remembered, that he was a prelate in that church, which considers it a meritorious act to persecute even unto death, those who dare to differ in opinion from any of her received dogmas.

The death of Warham having left the see of Canterbury vacant, the King was anxious to have it filled with a man of learning and abilities. He entertained a very high opinion of Dr. Thomas Cranmer, as a man every way qualified to fill that important station, and resolved to promote him to it. The doctor saw both dangers and difficulties connected with that station, which made him sincerely and earnestly request that another might be appointed ; but the King was positive, and he complied in hopes of promoting a reformation in the church, the necessity of which became daily more apparent.

During Cranmer's residence on the continent, he had read many of the books written by Luther, and others of the German

Reformers, and he felt strong scruples about taking the oath of canonical obedience to the Pope; partly, because it was inconsistent with the oath he had to take to the King, and partly, because it might cramp him in promoting that reformation in the church which he intended. To remove these scruples, the subject was referred to certain canonists and casuists, who proposed the following salvo, that the primate elect, before he took the oath to the Pope, should make a formal protestation: "That he did not intend, by taking that oath, to restrain himself from doing what he thought to be his duty to God, to his King, and his country." Having made the above protestation, he was consecrated March 13th, A.D. 1533.*

It appears from the various attempts made by Henry, to prevail upon the Pope to dissolve his marriage with Catharine, that he had no intention of an entire separation between the church of England and the see of Rome. But by the providence of God, all his efforts were rendered abortive, for the Pope, in a full consistory held March 23d, A.D. 1534, pronounced the marriage between Henry and Catharine to be lawful, and thus closed the long disputed point, which produced a total breach between the

* Burnet, from Antiq. Brit. in vita Cranmer.

court and church of Rome and the court and church of England; one of the most propitious and important events in the history of Great Britain.*

The above event, which rendered a reconciliation between the King and the Pope impracticable, was followed by several very important acts of parliament. One of the first was, that no application be made to Rome for bulls, for the election and consecration of bishops; the violation of this law exposed the violator to a premunire.—By another act, all appeals to the Pope and his courts at Rome, were prohibited under the same penalty.—By another law, all payments to the Pope for Peter-pence, dispensations, procurations, provisions, bulls, grants, licenses, abolitions, &c. &c. are prohibited.†

These laws deprived the Pope of all the power, and all the revenues he had so long derived from England; and the same parliament granted to the King, as supreme head on earth of the church of England, and to his heirs and successors, all the powers, prerogatives, and emoluments they had taken from the Pope, which brought a great accession both of power and revenue to the crown. This was a blow at the root, which

* Henry, from Wilkin. Concil., p. 769. + Statutes, 25 Henry viii, c. 20.

his infallible Holiness did not foresee. Nor was this the only one; for, to eradicate from the minds of his subjects all veneration for the Pope, and respect for his authority, Henry caused the opinions of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge to be widely circulated:—"That the bishop of Rome had no more authority in England, by the word "of God, than any other foreign bishop;" which was subscribed and sealed by all the English bishops.—Another act was passed, commanding the name of the Pope to be struck out of all the books that were used in the service of the church. As the above was intended to announce the death of the Pope in England, it was also to pronounce King Henry his heir-at-law, and that he had entered upon his title and estates in the church. He published a royal mandate commanding all the prelates and inferior clergy to preach every Sunday in support of the King's supremacy, and against the authority of the bishop of Rome. Several books were written to prove, that the dominion which the bishop of Rome assumed as Christ's vicar on earth, was an usurpation, and had no foundation in scripture. In this state the affairs of the church stood, A.D. 1534.



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